COMMENTARY OF MARSILIO FICINO ON THE *SYMPOSIUM* OF PLATO ON THE SUBJECT OF LOVE

Chapter I

Plato, the father of philosophers, passed away at the age of eighty-one after the food had been cleared away at a banquet on his birthday, November 7.[1] This banquet, which commemorated both his birthday and the anniversary of his death, was renewed every year by all the early Platonists down to the time of Plotinus and Porphyry.[2] But for twelve hundred years after Porphyry these annual feasts were not observed.

At last in our own day, the illustrious Lorenzo de' Medici,[3] wishing to reestablish the Platonic symposium,[4] appointed Francesco Bandini Master of the Feast[5] and so, when Bandini had declared November 7 the date for

1 Plato's birthday was celebrated by the ancients on the seventh of Thargelion (May) (Shorey, *What Plato Said,* p. 1). Della Torre (p. 813) says that since the time of Plutarch, November 7 had been set aside as the date on which to celebrate the birthday of Plato with a banquet. At any rate, November 7 was the accepted date in the fifteenth century. Modern scholarship has not yet determined even the year of Plato's birth exactly, though it lies apparently between 429 and 427 B. C. He died about 348-7 B. C. (Shorey, *loc. cit.*). According to Della Torre, the banquet described here must have taken place November 7, 1474, but his proof is not unquestionable (Della Torre, p. 814).

2 Plotinus, the greatest of the Alexandrian Neoplatonists, (c. 204-5—270 A. D.) was a pupil of Ammonius Sakkas, the founder of Neoplatonism. Ficino translated and edited the complete works of Plotinus (completed in 1490) when he had finished his edition of Plato. The text of the *Enneads* had been secured for him some time before (1462) by Cosimo de' Medici, and though he had not translated them before he wrote his *Plato,* he knew them thoroughly (Della Torre, p. 617). For a summary of the wide influence of Plotinus on speculative mysticism, see Joseph Mareschal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics,* London, 1927, p. 297 (cited by Collins, p. 9). Porphyry (b. 233 A. D.) was a contemporary and close friend of Plotinus and his chief contribution to Neoplatonism was his collection of the works of Plotinus into the nine *Enneads.*

3 This is a complimentary statement; Ficino himself was the inspiration and motivation for the revival. Bandini had charge of preparations for the banquet and selection of the guests, and it was at his home in Florence that the banquet was held the following year (Della Torre, pp. 814-815). It is this circumstance, probably, which Roscoe, who borrows information unacknowledged from the *Commentary,* refers to, in saying that Lorenzo decreed two symposiums, one at Careggio, and one at Florence, and that Bandini was in charge of the one at Florence (*Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,* [1889] p. 134).

4 As Shorey points out (p. 542), Plato does not use the word *συμπόσιον,* but the words *συνουσία, σύνδειπνον,* and *δεῖπνον.* Cf. 172B, 176E, 174A.

5 Francesco Bandini, a priest, the son of Giovanni di Piero, lived on a rich inheritance from his family, but had served on occasion as the diplomatic agent of the Medici. He was a man of letters and Ficino called him "Vir ingenio magnificentiaque excellens." The clergy had a definite place in the Academy, because Ficino regarded the very purpose of the Academy as "The defense of religion against the assaults of the incredulous through the means of the Platonic system." In his preface to the edition of Plato he says, "Ubique [in Academia] sacerdotes rerumque sacrarum antistites arma reperient quibus pietatem adversus impios strenue protegant" (Della Torre, pp. 766-769). The "Master of the Feast," was the ancient Master of Drinking, who presided over the wine bowl and set the *νόμοι συμποτικοί.*

the celebration, he entertained in regal splendor at the villa, at Careggio,[6] nine guest Platonists: Antonio Agli, Bishop of Fiesole;[7] Ficino, the physician;[8] Cristoforo Landino, the poet;[9] Bernardo Nuzzi, the rhetorician;[10] Tommaso Benci;[11] Giovanni Cavalcanti, our dear friend, whom, because of his virtue of soul and noble appearance, they named Hero of the feast;[12]

6 The magnificent villa, at Careggio, on the slopes of Montevecchio, where the Academy met, belonged to the Medici family, and facing it was Ficino's small house, the so-called "Academy," which had been given him by Cosimo de' Medici September 4, 1462, as a retreat for his philosophical labors. There the so-called "Careggian Academy" of Ficino's close friends met, and there Ficino died in 1499. On the Careggian villa, cf. Della Torre, pp. 538-41, 558, and Guido Carocci, "La Villa Medicea di Careggi," Firenze, 1888, pp. 55-64.

7 Antonio di Bellincione degli Agli (1400-1477) was one of Ficino's most intimate friends. He became Bishop of Fiesole in 1467. A learned scholar in Greek and Latin, he was appointed by Pope Eugene IV as teacher of his own nephew, the future Paolo II. He had known Ficino from the time of Cosimo and referred to him as "magna indole juvenis." From Agli's writings we learn that at Cosimo's death "ei [Ficino] enim et domus in urbe ab eo coempta, fundus autem in dono datus, ut, nulla inopia, nulla solicitudine anxius, litteris operam dare jugiter valeat" (Della Torre, pp. 775-76).

8 "Ficino the physician" refers to Marsilio's father, Diotifeci d'Agnolo di Giusto, who was physician to Cosimo de' Medici. It is worth noting that Ficino's name is the diminutive of his father's name, Diotifeci, and is not derived, as has been suggested, from the place of his birth, Figline (Saitta, p. 1). Like the clergy, the medical profession was represented in the Academy for a definite reason. According to Ficino's theory, we are composed of body, spirit, and soul (Saitta, p. 188), which are governed respectively by Medicine, Music, and Theology. In order to discuss the whole man, the group had to include a physician. Ficino himself had learned the profession and was engaged in medical study at Bologna when Cosimo summoned him to philosophy in 1459. As late as 1470 his name was included on the list of Florentine physicians (Della Torre, pp. 776-778).

9 Cristoforo Landino was the oldest member of the Medicean circle. Born at Florence in 1424, nine years before Ficino, he shared with Ficino the duties of instructing the young Lorenzo. Landino was strictly a scholar and from 1457-1504 occupied the chair of Latin literature in the University of Florence. He is remembered today chiefly for his edition of Dante (Symonds, II, p. 338).

10 Bernardo di Francesco Nuzzi was one of five rhetoricians in the Academy and a man of such ability that Ficino called him the "Cicero of his day." He was one of the six priors of Florence from September to October, 1473. By *rhetor*, Ficino means "rhetorician, or professor of oratory and poetic art" (Della Torre, pp. 701-3). His own familiarity with the principles of rhetoric is plainly evident, not only in his style, but in his theory of beauty; cf. Speech V.

11 Tommaso Benci and his brother Giovanni were the sons of Lorenzo. Tommaso was engaged in the mercantile business, but, in the manner of the times, found time between his buying and selling to dabble in poetry and philosophy. Some of his love poetry and also his translation into Italian of the *Poimandros* of Hermes Trismegistus are extant. The latter was based on Ficino's own Latin translation of the same work (1463), which was dedicated to Benci in glowing terms (Della Torre, pp. 555-558).

12 Giovanni Cavalcanti (b. 1448), though fifteen years Ficino's junior, was his closest friend. He was the son of Nicolo di Giovanni and was essentially a politician, but had been instructed in the Platonic philosophy by Dominico Galletti and had studied rhetoric under Landino, so that he was well equipped for the intellectual companionship and, indeed, inspiration which he afforded Ficino. During Ficino's period of mental depression (1459-69), Cavalcanti was his chief consolation and finally succeeded in bringing Ficino out of his mood by philosophical insistence upon the doctrine of love. To him Ficino dedicated his translation of Speusippus and Alcinous on Plato, and the *Laws* and *Symbols* of Pythagoras in 1463, as well as the original version of the *Commentary on the Symposium* (1467) (Della Torre, pp. 566-568, 647-8).

the two Marsuppini, Cristoforo and Carlo,[13] sons of the poet Carlo Marsuppini;[14] and finally, Bandini wished me to be the ninth, so that with the addition of the name Marsilio Ficino[15] to those already mentioned, the number of the Muses might be rounded out.

When the food had been cleared away, Bernardo Nuzzi took the volume of Plato which is inscribed *Symposium on Love* and read all the speeches of this *Symposium*. When he had finished reading, he asked that each of the guests explain one of the speeches. They all consented, and when the lots had been drawn, the first speech, that of Phaedrus, fell to Giovanni Cavalcanti to explain. The speech of Pausanias fell to the theologian Agli; that of Eryximachus, the physician, to the physician Ficino; that of the poet Aristophanes to the poet Landino; that of Agathon, the young man, to Carlo Marsuppini; to Tommaso Benci was given the discourse of Socrates, and finally the speech of Alcibiades fell to Cristoforo Marsuppini. Everyone approved the lot as it had fallen out; but the bishop and the physician were called away, the one to the care of souls, the other to the care of bodies, and they resigned their parts in the discussion to Giovanni Cavalcanti, to whom the rest then turned and fell silent, ready to listen. The Hero of the feast began the discussion in this way:

FIRST SPEECH

By what Rule Love is Praised. In what its Dignity and Greatness Consist.

Chapter II

This lot of yours has fallen most gratifyingly to me, my dear fellow-banqueters, in assigning to me the part of Phaedrus the Myrrhinusian; that famous Phaedrus whose friendship was so cherished by the famous orator, Lysias of Thebes,[1] that Lysias tried to win his affections with a laboriously

13 Of these two young men only Carlo is well known. He was a poet of the Academy whose poetic work, so far as we know, has not survived to the present. He was a student of Cristoforo Landino and was highly recommended to Donato Acciaivoli by Ficino, who called him "adolescentem doctum" and "musarum alumnum" (Della Torre, p. 658).

14 Carlo Marsuppini was a prominent poet in the circle of Cosimo de' Medici and was not present at the banquet. He was made Apostolic Secretary under Cosimo and was afterwards promoted to the Chancery of Florence (Symonds, II, p. 187).

15 Ficino, the author. His report of the speeches, at the behest of Lorenzo, is throughout his own interpretation (Della Torre, pp. 814-15).

1 Lysias was one of the ten great Athenian orators. He was born about 458 B. C., the son of Cephalus, in whose house Plato set the scene of the *Republic*. He was not, as Ficino says, a Theban. His father was a metic of Athens who had come, not from Thebes, but from Syracuse. The relation between Lysias and Phaedrus is well shown in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

written speech. This is the Phaedrus whose charm Socrates admired so much that once, by the Ilyssus[2] river, inspired and carried away by the beauty of Phaedrus, he sang[3] divine mysteries; the same Socrates, who had theretofore boasted that he was ignorant not only of heavenly things but of earthly as well.[4] Plato was so much pleased by the ability of Phaedrus that he dedicated to him the first fruits of his studies;[5] to him his epigrams, to him his elegies,[6] and to him his first book on Beauty, which is inscribed, *Phaedrus*. Since, therefore, it has been suggested that I am like this Phaedrus—not by me, certainly, for I do not claim so much for myself—but first by the falling of the lot, and then by your approval, with these favorable auspices, I shall gladly explain his speech first. Then I shall handle the parts of Antonio and Ficino to the best of my ability.

Any Platonic philosopher, gentlemen, considers three aspects of any thing: What [sort of thing][7] has gone before, what accompanies it, and what follows it. If these be good, he praises the thing itself, but if bad, he censures it. This, therefore, is the complete praise, which cites the ancient origin of the thing, describes its present virtues, and predicts its future benefits. On the basis of its antecedents, a thing is praised as noble; on the basis of its present nature, as great; and on the basis of its consequences, as beneficial. From those three, therefore, there are included in its praises these three: nobility, greatness, and utility. Therefore, our Phaedrus, having first surveyed the present excellence of Love,[8] called Him "the Great God." "And worthy of the admiration," he added, "of both gods and men." And properly so, for we rightly admire what is great. Certainly He is great to whose rule men and gods they say are all subject: for according to the

2 The Ilissus river flows southwest from Mt. Hymettus through the southern part of Athens.

3 Latin *cecinerit*, the equivalent of the Greek ὑμνεῖν, which was a popular term among the Neoplatonists and especially with Proclus (Hasse, p. 226, note 3).

4 Socrates' claim of ignorance is well known, but the most famous statement of it is in the *Apology*, where he uses it in defense against the charge of "investigating things beneath the earth and in the heavens." *Apology*, 19-24. Cf. also *Phaedrus*, 235D.

5 The "first fruits" refers to Plato's early poetry, including some tragedy, which he is said to have burned when he reached maturity, or, as Lewes says, "when he met Socrates." Ficino, in order to live up to his reputation as the *alter Plato*, also burned some of his early work, a commentary on Lucretius, written at the age of twenty-four (Della Torre, p. 637).

6 The Italian reads *leggi* ('laws'); all the Latin texts read *elegiae*.

7 In the Italian only.

8 The Greek word *Eros* has both philosophical and personal connotations, which we can represent in the word *love* only by capitalizing it for the latter. The German translator, however, faced still another difficulty. The German word for personified love is *Amor*, as in Latin, and conveys no philosophical meaning at all. Hasse, therefore, uses the Greek name *Eros*. Though we could in English represent both connotations of the word by keeping the Latin *Amor*, it has seemed best to anglicize it, distinguishing between its meanings only by a capital letter for the god and a small letter for the idea. Cf. Hasse, p. 226, note 1.

ancients, the gods love like men, which is what Orpheus[9] and Hesiod[10] mean when they say that the minds of mortals and immortals alike are ruled over by Love. Love is to be admired, moreover, it is said, since every man loves that whose beauty he admires. The gods or, as our own Christian theologists[11] say, the angels, admire as well as love divine beauty, as men admire and love the beauties of bodies. This, then, is the praise of Love deduced from His present excellence, which is inherent in Him.

Then Phaedrus praises Love for His antecedents, when he says that He is the oldest of the gods. Here the nobility of Love is glorified, when His seniority is shown. Phaedrus will praise Him thirdly for His effects, when His wonderful benefits will in due time appear, but we shall discuss first Love's noble genesis, and then His future benefits.

The Origin of Love out of Chaos.[12]

Chapter III

Orpheus, in the *Argonautica*[13] when he was singing of the origins of things, before Chiron and the heroes, followed the theology of Hermes Trismegistus,[14] placing Chaos before the world, and before Saturn, Jove, and the other gods. He placed Love in the heart of Chaos itself, and praised Him in these words: Love is the oldest and wisest of the gods, and perfect in himself.

Hesiod, in his *Theogony*,[15] Parmenides, the Pythagorean,[16] in his book

9 "If, as Cicero declares, Aristotle denied the existence of the mythical Orpheus, the fact counted for nothing" in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Ficino, like all the other ancients and medievalists, quoted as genuine the *Orphica*. All references to the poems here are to the edition of Eugenius Abel, Leipzig, 1885. Ficino read them in Eusebius's collection of fragments, *De Praeparatione Evangelica* (Saitta, p. 56).

10 Ficino translated Hesiod's extant works as an exercise in his preparation for translating Plato.

11 Since the Italian reads *Nostri Teologi*, by *nostri* Ficino is evidently pointing a contrast of the pagan philosophers, who referred to *"the gods,"* with the "Christian theologists," most of them real or supposed church fathers, such as St. Paul, St. John, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Bonaventura, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Hierotheus (Della Torre, p. 592).

12 In the Italian translation, the chapter heading is placed here. In the Latin editions it follows the next paragraph.

13 *Argonautica*, 14 ff.

14 Hermes Trismegistus, the name of the Egyptian god Thoth, was assumed by an Alexandrian writer living probably between the time of Josephus and Tertullian (c. 160-200 A. D.) (Guthrie, p. 12), who wrote a body of religious works called the Hermetic Books, of which the *Poimandros* is the only one extant. His writing, a mixture of Platonic dualism and Stoic pantheism, is the chief source of emanationism in Plotinus, and hence in Ficino, who considered him the fountainhead of true Egyptian religion as Orpheus of Thracian, and Plato of Greek (Della Torre, p. 595). The Hermetic writings, like the *Orphica*, were written to defend ancient culture against rising Christianity.

15 *Theogony*, 116 ff.

16 *Parmenides* was not a Pythagorean, as Ficino says, but a distinguished Eleatic philosopher, a disciple of Xenophanes (fl. about 450 B. C.). His *De Natura* is a didactic poem in which he expounds his philosophy. Hasse suggests that the error of calling him a Pythagorean probably has its roots in the passage of Book I

On Nature, and the poet Acusilaus,[17] have agreed, along with Orpheus and Hermes. Plato, in the *Timaeus,*[18] describes Chaos similarly and in it places Love. Phaedrus describes it in the same way in the *Symposium.*

By "Chaos" the Platonists[19] mean the world in its formless state; but by "world" they mean Chaos endowed with form.[20] For the Platonists, there are three worlds;[21] therefore, there will be three Chaoses. First of all is God, the author of everything, who we say is the Good Itself.[22] He created first the Angelic Mind,[23] then the Soul of this World as Plato would have it,[24]

of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in which he discusses the Eleatics immediately after the Pythagoreans. The *De Natura* quoted here (*πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων,* Diels, H., *Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker* (1903), p. 127) is also the source of the charioteer figure in the *Phaedrus,* which Ficino also discusses (Speech VII).

17 Acusilaus, a Greek logographer of about 550 B. C., wrote *The Genealogies* and a prose version of Homer. The line mentioned is listed by Diels (pp. 510-11) as being from *The Genealogies,* and is quoted as a fragment from Plato's mention of it (*Symp.* 178B) only. Diels refers the reader to *Diog. Laer.* IV, 26.

18 *Timaeus* 29A-31A. Hasse refers the Neoplatonic chaos here to Plotinus, *Enneads* VI, 8, 11 (Hasse, p. 228, note 10).

19 "Platonists," from what follows, obviously refers here to the Neoplatonists: Plotinus, Porphyry, et al., whom he thought of as Platonists here, merely explaining the meaning of the *Timaeus.* Elsewhere the term is used indiscriminately to apply to Platonists, Neoplatonists, Church Fathers, and even the Arabians, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Gazali, who were as much Aristotelians as Platonists (Saitta, p. 35). In the seventh speech he refers to Apuleius as a Platonist. According to Ficino, the genealogy of Platonism was as follows: Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Philolaus, Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, and Ficino (Saitta, p. 56).

20 Ficino's explanation of creation here is a Platonic handling of Neoplatonic materials. That is, Plotinus and Proclus believed that the picture of God giving form to a separate Chaos was a false picture, that creation is out of nothing, but, unlike the Christian creation, in eternity. The three worlds which result from the creation are Neoplatonic, but the method of creation is far from the involved theory of eternal emanation in Plotinus. In order to emphasize the power of Love as the creating force, Ficinio breaks down the Plotinian process into clear steps in a time order, describing for each sphere of being the effect of love moving over a chaos, and it was from this that the Renaissance theory of creation as Love's giving order to Chaos had its immediate source, though the ultimate source is of course the passage on creation in the *Timaeus* (29-31). Although he uses this method to make his meaning clearer, Ficino believed that creation was extra-spatial and extra-temporal. Cf. Saitta, p. 101. For a clear discussion of the difficulties of this problem of creation, many of which rise from the inconsistencies of Plotinus, see Inge, I, pp. 143-5.

21 The Neoplatonic trinity of divine principles was: the Absolute, the Angelic Mind (what Inge calls "Spirit"), and the World-Soul, which are not temporally consecutive in Plotinus, but co-existent eternally. Ficino, on the grounds that God cannot etymologically be called a "world," moves the triad down a notch, adding the World-Body which corresponds to the *λόγοι σπερματικοί,* or "plastic entities," of Plotinus. For the Neoplatonists, God or the Absolute is Pure Being. The three levels beneath Him are Becoming, and beneath them is *ὕλη,* or matter, pure absence of Being. Cf. Collins, p. 10.

22 In Plotinus, the Absolute, or One, is called *τὸ ἀγαθόν.*

23 The Angelic Mind corresponds to the Platonic *νοῦς* adapted to fit the Neoplatonic system (Shorey, *Platonism,* p. 49). For Plotinus the Angelic Mind represents pure Being, because it is all thought. God is Supra-Mind, and Supra-Being.

24 The World-Soul is not merely the sum of the individual souls (even though all things, even inanimate objects, are considered to have souls, in the Neoplatonic

and last, the Body of the World.[25] That highest realm we call God, not a "world," because *world* means *fabrication,*[26] composed of many, whereas that ought to be perfectly simple, and we affirm it to be the beginning and end of all the worlds. The first world made by God was the Angelic Mind. The second was the Soul of the Universe; the third was this whole structure which we perceive sensibly. In these three worlds there are considered to be three chaoses.

In the beginning, God created the substance of the Angelic Mind, which we also call Essence.[27] This, in the first moment of its creation, was formless and dark, but since it was born from God, it turned toward God, its own source, with a certain innate desire. When turned toward God, it was illumined by the glory of God Himself. In the glow of His radiance its own passion was set ablaze. When its whole passion was kindled, it drew close to God, and in cleaving to Him, assumed form. For God, who is omnipotent, created in the Angelic Mind, as it cleaved to Him, the forms[28] of all things to be created. In this Mind, therefore, in some spiritual way was painted, so to speak, everything which we sense in these bodies [of the material world]. In those forms were conceived the globes of heaven and the elements, the stars, the kinds of vapors, the forms of stones, metals, plants, and animals. These Prototypes or Forms of everything conceived by the dispensation of God in the Angelic Mind are, we cannot doubt, the Ideas. That Form or Idea of the heavens we call the god Uranus, the form of the

sense) but a whole over and above the sum. The individual souls are individual, but they are at the same time in the Whole Soul, a relation impossible with material things, but possible in the spiritual realm. The Soul is the copula between the world of the Mind, and that of the Body, and the world is in it rather than it in the world (Inge, I, p. 218). Unlike the Stoics, who postulated a Universal Soul for the whole Universe, Plotinus limits his World Soul to the Earth, and says that there are other souls for the other planets (Guthrie, p. 34). Ficino borrows, of course, the World-Soul of Plotinus.

25 The Body of the World is not *ὕλη,* the basic concept of matter, the lowest realm in the Neoplatonic scale of being, but merely the physical world of sense perception. Cf. note 21 above.

26 *Fabrication,* translating L. *ornamentum.* Ficino's etymology here is correct.

27 *Essence* corresponds roughly to the Aristotelian concept of Form, as contrasted with substance, which corresponds roughly with matter (Hasse, p. 228, note 12). Hasse's explanation does not convey the importance in Neoplatonic thought of the scale of being, which emphasized essence as pure being, represented by the Angelic Mind, as distinguished from the Soul and certainly the physical world, which were certainly mixed with substance, and were therefore partly becoming. Ficino's point is that the Angelic Mind, too, was, in a sense, in the first moment of its creation, substance, or material for form, until God supplied it with the ideas of everything. Then the Mind became pure being, that is, pure thought, or essence. God Himself was above Being, above thought, above essence. Ficino said, "Sicut enim essentiae actus est esse, atque intellectus ipsius actus est intelligere, sic vitae actus vivere" (*Theol. Plat.,* VI, 11, p. 170, quoted by Saitta, p. 143). For Ficino prime matter is the matter of matter, ultimate form is the form of form. Prime matter, for Ficino, as for Aristotle, is pure potentiality. Prime matter represents non-existence, and ultimate form perfect existence, or essence (Saitta, p. 123).

28 *Forms* here has essentially the Platonic meaning of *Ideas.*

first planet we call the god Saturn,[29] of the second Jove,[30] and so on with all the rest of the planets. Likewise, the Idea of fire we call the god Vulcan, of the air Jupiter and Juno, of the sea Neptune, and of the earth Pluto.[31] In this way all the gods are assigned to certain parts of the lower world; the Ideas of those parts are collected together in the Angelic Mind, but the drawing near of the Mind to God preceded the completed reception of the Ideas from God who created them. Before the approach came the kindling of passion, before that the illumination by the divine light, before that the first inclination of desire, and before that the substance of the disorderly Mind. It is that still formless substance which we mean by Chaos; that first turning toward God we call the birth of Love; the infusion of the divine light, the nourishing of love; the ensuing conflagration, the increment of love; the approach to God, the impact of love; and the giving of the forms, the completion of love. This composite of all the Forms and Ideas we call in Latin a *mundus,* and in Greek, a *cosmos,* that is, *Orderliness.* The attractiveness of this *Orderliness* is Beauty. To beauty, Love, as soon as it was born, drew the Mind, and led the Mind formerly un-beautiful to the same Mind made beautiful. And so we may say that the nature of Love is this, that it attracts to beauty and links the un-beautiful with the beautiful.[32] Who, therefore, will doubt that Love immediately followed Chaos, and preceded the world and all the gods who were assigned to the various parts of the world? The more so, since the passion of the Angelic Mind preceded its own acquisition of form, and in that Mind, once it had taken form, were born the gods and the world. And so Orpheus was right in naming Love the oldest of the gods, and also calling him "perfect in himself," as much as to say "self-completing," since that first instinct of the Angelic Mind by its own nature seems to have drawn its own completion from God,

29 The application of the names of the mythological gods to the planets is familiar. Their application to ideas Ficino found in Plotinus, who calls the Angelic Mind Saturn, the World-Soul Jupiter, etc., "for short," as he says (*Enn.,* IV, 4, 9-10 ff., quoted in Guthrie, p. 34).

30 Ficino believed in the Aristotelian theory of homocentric spheres in a geo-centric universe. According to his astronomy, borrowed, for the most part, from Plato (Saitta, p. 128), the order of the planets was as follows, from the center out: Earth, Moon, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn (Johnson, pp. 35, 63-64).

31 The problem of whether to use the Greek or Roman names for the gods is perplexing in Ficino. Logically, since Ficino's medium was Roman, the Latin names as used throughout in this translation should be preferable. The one exception to this rule is that of Uranus above, whose Latin name, Caelus, is so unfamiliar to modern mythology that to use it would be to sacrifice meaning. Hasse points out that Ficino himself was not consistent (e.g. he uses Pallas and Athena for Minerva, V, 13, and V, 1), and that the difficulty of Eros makes the Greek name advisable in that case; he consequently uses the Greek names for the gods, except where the planets are meant. This distinction has not been observed in this translation because it was not essential to clarity of meaning.

32 This activistic concept of Love, much more dynamic than the contemplative ideal of Plato, is the central point in Ficino's philosophy (Saitta, p. 235).

and to have shown that completion to the Mind, which took form from it, and likewise to the gods, who rose from it.

Phaedrus also called Love "most wise," and rightly so, for omniscience, whence all wisdom properly derives, is attributed to the Angelic Mind, because the Mind (when it was turned toward God by Love,) glowed with the light of God Himself. The Angelic Mind was turned toward God in the same way in which the eye is directed toward the light of the sun.[33] For first it looks away, then it sees only the light of the sun, then third, in the light of the sun it perceives the colors and shapes of things. The eye is at first blind, and, like Chaos, formless. When it sees the light, it loves the light and is, in turn, lighted up in looking at it; in receiving the glow, it receives form in the colors and shapes of things.

Now in the same way that the Angelic Mind, just born and formless, was turned by love toward God and received from Him its form, so also the World-Soul turned toward the Mind and toward God, from whom it was born. And, although it was at first formless and a chaos, it was directed by love toward the Angelic Mind, and of forms received from the Mind became a world; and so with the matter of this world, although in the beginning it lay a formless chaos without the ornament of forms, attracted by innate love, it turned toward the Soul and offered itself submissively to it, and by the mediation of this love, it found ornament, from the Soul, of all the forms which are seen in this world; and thus out of a chaos was made a world.

Therefore, there are three worlds, and also three chaoses. Finally, in each case, Love accompanies the chaos, precedes the world, wakens the drowsy, lights the obscure, revives the dead, gives form to the formless, and finishes the incomplete. Certainly no greater praises than these can be spoken of, or even conceived.

On the Benefits of Love.

Chapter IV

But thus far we have discussed only the origin and nobility of Love. I think we ought now to discuss his benefits. To refer individually to the separate benefits of Love to mankind is superfluous, especially since they can all be dealt with as a whole. The principle of them all is, that by avoiding evil, we pursue the good. The evil deeds of man are the same as his ugly deeds.[34] Likewise, the good are the same as the beautiful. Certainly all the laws and codes provide nothing but instruction to man himself to avoid the ugly and cleave to the beautiful. But this state of moral rectitude, which almost innumerable laws and codes after a long time and with great

33 This analogy with the sun is familiar from Plato's *Republic,* VI, 508-510, and is used by Plotinus to make clear the theory of emanation.

34 Ficino's concept of good and evil was definitely dualistic, derived from St. Augustine and Dionysius the Areopagite. Saitta, pp. 249-52; Della Torre, p. 253; and Ficino, *Epist,* X p. 921 ff. But cf. Robb, p. 82.

difficulty succeed only partly in bringing about, Love accomplishes in a moment. For shame frightens men away from evil deeds, and the desire of being superior summons them to good deeds. Nothing lays these two before men more sharply and clearly than Love. When we say Love, we mean by that term the desire for beauty,[35] for this is the definition of Love among all philosophers. Beauty is, in fact, a certain charm which is found chiefly and predominantly in the harmony of several elements.[36] This charm is threefold: there is a certain charm in the soul, in the harmony of several virtues; charm is found in material objects, in the harmony of several colors and lines; and likewise charm in sound is the best harmony of several tones. There is, therefore, this triple beauty: of the soul, of the body, and of sound. That of the soul is perceived by the mind; that of the body, by the eyes; and that of sound, by the ear alone. Since, therefore, the mind, the sight, and the hearing are the only means by which we are able to enjoy beauty, and since Love is the desire for enjoying beauty, Love is always limited to [the pleasures of] the mind, the eyes, and the ears. What need is there of the senses of smell, taste, and touch? Odors, flavors, heat, cold, softness, hardness, and like qualities are the objects of these senses. None of these is human beauty, since these qualities are simple, and human beauty of the body requires a harmony of various parts. Love regards as its end the enjoyment of beauty; beauty pertains only to the mind, sight, and hearing. Love, therefore, is limited to these three, but desire which rises from the other senses is called, not love, but lust or madness.

Further, if love in relation to man desires human beauty itself, and the beauty of the human body consists in a certain harmony; and if that harmony is a kind of temperance, it follows that love seeks only what is temperate, moderate, and decorous. Pleasures and sensations which are so impetuous and irrational that they jar the mind from its stability and unbalance a man, love does not only not desire, but hates and shuns, because these sensations, being so intemperate, are the opposites of beauty. A mad lasciviousness drags a man down to intemperance and disharmony, and hence seems to attract him to ugliness, whereas love attracts to beauty. Ugliness and beauty are opposites. The impulses, therefore, which attract to these two, seem to be mutually opposites. It follows that love and the desire for physical union are not only not identical impulses, but are proved to be opposite ones.

35 Ficino's idea of beauty is a spiritual idea, but more adequately treated than that of either Plato or Plotinus (Saitta, p. 236). As Saitta says, "The aestheticism which was a thing peculiar to the Renaissance, with Ficino assumes the aspect of a real and proper theory" (p. 237). The complete fifth speech of this *Commentary* is devoted to the exposition of that theory, which was basically the theory of Michelangelo after 1530 (Blunt, p. 65).

36 This theory is an elaboration of a suggestion in the first *Ennead* of Plotinus (*Enn.*, I, 6, 1) that beauty is mostly in the sight, but also in the hearing. For Plotinus, beauty is a certain symmetry of parts and a charm of color. For his theory of Beauty, cf. Saitta, p. 237.

To this the ancient theologians attest who gave the name of Love to God; and this also the later [Christian][37] theologians strongly affirmed. In fact, there is no name befitting God which is congruous also with things base. Therefore, it behooves a man of sound mind to be careful not to apply indiscriminately the divine name *Love* to irrational emotions. Let Dicaearchus,[38] and whoever else makes bold to accuse the Platonic majesty of indulging too much in love, blush with shame, for we can never indulge too much, or even enough, the proper, pure, and divine passions. From this it follows that all true love is honorable, and every lover virtuous. For all [Love] is beautiful and fair and properly loves the fair. But the turbulent passion by which men are seduced to wantonness, since it attracts them to ugliness, is considered the opposite of love.

To return at length, therefore, to the benefits of love, the sense of shame which prevents our committing evil deeds, and the desire for good which incites us to do good deeds, both spring quickly and easily from love; in the first place, because love, which seeks beauty, always desires the fit and noble, and he who hates ugliness necessarily shuns baseness and obscenity. In the second place, if two people care for each other, they watch each other constantly, and also try to please each other. Inasmuch as each is watched by the other, they abstain from all evil, for they never lack a witness. Inasmuch as they try to please each other, they are always undertaking great tasks with a burning zeal, so that they may not appear contemptible in the eyes of the beloved, but may seem worthy of an exchange of love.

Phaedrus explains this process most copiously where he gives three examples of loves. One is the love of woman for man, which he exemplifies in the love of Admetus for his wife, Alcestis, who was willing to die for her husband. Another is the love of man for woman, like that of Orpheus for Eurydice. The third is the love of man for man, like that of Patroclus for Achilles, in which Phaedrus shows that nothing makes men stronger so much as love.

But it is not our plan for the present to examine these allegories, whether the story of Alcestis, or that of Orpheus, for they illustrate better the strength and authority of love if they are told merely as historical events than if they are interpreted allegorically. Therefore, let us agree without dispute that Love is a great and wonderful god, noble, as well, and of the greatest benefits; and let us so devote ourselves to Love that we shall be content with His own end, which is Beauty itself. We enjoy beauty with the faculty by which we learn; we learn with our minds, our sight, and our hearing. [With these three senses we enjoy Beauty.[39]] With the other senses

37 Here the Italian text reads *i Cristiani Teologi;* cf. note 11 *supra.*

38 Dicaearchus of Messene, a pupil of Aristotle, was a geographer and historian whose works are lost. He wrote in particular a treatise on life in Greece, Βίος τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

39 In the Italian, but not in the Latin.

we enjoy, not beauty, which Love seeks, but whatever else fills the needs of the body. Therefore, with these three we shall hunt beauty and trace in that physical beauty which appears in sounds and bodies, as though in a kind of track, the beauty of the soul. We shall praise, of course, that former physical beauty, and approve the other as just; and we shall always try to keep in mind that the greatness of love corresponds to the greatness of the beauty it desires. When the body is beautiful and the soul is not at all, let us be slow and reluctant to worship the bodily beauty, like the shadowy passing image of beauty.[40] When the soul alone is beautiful, let us love ardently this immutable beauty of the soul. When either beauty happens to coincide with the other, let us be especially adoring, and thus we shall testify to our having belonged to the Platonic family, for it knows nothing but holy, joyful, heavenly, and divine things. But this is enough on the speech of Phaedrus; let us turn to Pausanias.

40 This shadowy image of beauty is a figure borrowed from Plato's myth of the cave, *Republic,* VII, 514-521.

SECOND SPEECH

God is Goodness, Beauty, and Justice, the Beginning, Middle, and End.

Chapter I

The Pythagorean philosophers[1] believed that a trinity[2] was the measure of everything, for the reason, I think, that God governs things in threes, and also that things themselves are defined according to a triple classification;[3] hence that statement of Virgil that "God rejoices in odd numbers."[4] Certainly the great Creator first creates everything, then He attracts, and third He finishes. Everything also, when it is born, flows from that eternal source; then it flows back to the same source when it seeks its own origin; and finally it is finished when it has returned to its own source. Orpheus[5] explained this and called Jupiter the beginning, the middle, and the end of the universe: the beginning inasmuch as he produces it, the middle inasmuch as he attracts his products back to himself, and the end inasmuch as he finishes the things that return to him. Hence we can now call the ruler of the universe, Good, Beautiful, and Just, as He is spoken of in Plato: Good, I say, when He creates; Beautiful, when He attracts to Himself; and Just, when He finishes according to the desert of each thing. Beauty, then, whose property it is to attract, is placed between Goodness and Justice: from Goodness it flows out, and to Justice it proceeds.

How Divine Beauty Inspires Love.

Chapter II

This Divine Beauty creates in everything love, that is, desire for itself, because if God draws the world to Himself, and the world is drawn [from Him][6] there is one continuous attraction, beginning with God, going to the

1 The mathematical mysticism of Pythagoras was the source of much of the mysticism in Plato, particularly that in the *Timaeus,* which was the only Platonic dialogue translated during the Middle Ages. Ficino's borrowings from Pythagorean theory are numerous (e.g. Fifth Speech, ch. 13).

2 In the Pythagorean theory, odd numbers, and particularly three, were perfect good, and signified the divine. The number two was regarded as the basis of all hostility and inequality (Hasse, p. 229, note 1).

3 The doctrine of the trinity was one of the arguments advanced by the church fathers in favor of Plato (cf. Shorey, *Platonism,* p. 79 for the others). They thought they saw in the first three words of the *Timaeus:* "One, Two, Three," proof positive that Plato believed in the trinity. The triads of the Neoplatonists are well represented in the two of Plotinus: The One, Intellect, and Soul; and Soul, Spirit, and Body (Shorey, *op. cit.,* p. 75).

4 Vergil, "numero deus impare gaudet," *Eclogues,* VIII, 76.

5 Orpheus, *Ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος, ἀρχήν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων ἔχων εὐθεία περαίνει.* Plato, *Leges,* IV, 715D (Abel, p. 157). Cf. Schol. ad. h. 1, apud Bekkerum, III, 2, p. 451.

6 Bracketed phrases interpreted from Italian *da lui.*

world and ending at last in God, an attraction which returns to the same place whence it began as though in a kind of circle. This single circle, from God to the world and from the world to God, is identified by three names. Inasmuch as it begins in God and attracts to Him, it is Beauty; inasmuch as, going across into the world, it captivates the world, we call it Love; and inasmuch as it returns to its source and with Him joins its labors, then we call it Pleasure. In this way Love begins in Beauty and ends in Pleasure. It is this that Hierotheus[7] and Dionysius[8] the Areopagite mean in the famous hymn[9] in which they sing, "Love is a circle of good, revolving from good to good perpetually." For Love is necessarily Good, since from good, whence He is born, He returns to good again. For He is the same God, whose beauty everything desires, in whose possession everything is content; by whom our desire is kindled; and in whom the passion of lovers finds rest, not because it is spent, but because it is satisfied.

Further, Dionysius is quite justified in comparing God to the sun, because just as the sun illuminates and warms the body, so God provides to our spirits the light of truth and the ardor of love. At any rate, we find this comparison also in the sixth book of Plato's *Republic,*[10] something like this: "The sun generates both visible bodies and seeing eyes: to the eyes, so that they may see, it supplies a clear humor; and the bodies, so that they may be seen, it paints with colors." But still the light possessed by the eyes and the colors possessed by bodies are not enough to make vision complete unless they are aroused and strengthened by the presence and glow of the one light itself above the many, from which the many lights peculiar to the eyes and the bodies were sent out. In the same way, that prime actuality of all, who is called God,[11] gave to everything, as He produced it, activity and form.

7 Hierotheus is mentioned by Dionysius as his pupil and friend, and the author of a theological text, and some "Erotic Hymns." He was probably a teacher in the catechetical school in Alexandria.

8 Dionysius the Areopagite, the Pseudo-Dionysius, an author whose name and dates are unknown, claimed to be the first Bishop of Athens, appointed by Paul. His writings express absolute transcendentalism and enjoyed a wider and more lasting influence during the middle ages than those of any other of the Greek fathers. Probably he wrote in the fifth century in Syria. At any rate, he drew heavily upon the writings of Proclus (James M. Campbell, *The Greek Fathers,* 1929, pp. 75-82), and hence Ficino "put great store in the 'true light of Christian truth' which he found in Dionysius." His admiration was undoubtedly exaggerated, but he was, in fact, tremendously influenced by Dionysius (Saitta, p. 52).

9 Eusebius mentions this hymn in *De Praepar. Evang.,* III, 9 (Hasse, p. 229, note 2).

10 Plato, *Republic,* VI, 507E.

11 *Actus* here has the Aristotelian sense of *actus purus,* that is, actuality as opposed to potentiality (in Italian, *atto puro* and *potenza,* cf. Saitta, p. 89). This duality which Aristotle had presented to philosophy Christianity had solved in the person of Christ, but the Neoplatonists had left it unsolved. Ficino attempts to explain it away by identifying actuality with activity, and potentiality with passivity, and links these latter two as soul and body respectively (Saitta, p. 133). The subtleties of this theory make it very difficult to translate *actus,* which is both "activity" and "actuality." For Ficino, action, or activity, is 'being' (Saitta, p. 139). Life is

Certainly this activity, when it was first received by the new creation, and by the waiting object, was weak and incapable of performing any work, but the perpetual and invisible light of the divine sun is always present to everything; it sustains, stimulates, arouses, completes, and strengthens. About it Orpheus in a moment of inspiration says, "sustaining everything and raising itself high above all."[12] Insofar as it is the activity and strength of everything, it is called the Good; insofar as it stimulates and calms, soothes and arouses [everything according to its deserts and in as spiritual a way as possible][13] it is called the beautiful; and insofar as in objects of cognition it charms those three cognitive powers of the soul (the Mind, the Sight, and the Hearing), it is called Beauty. Insofar as it is in the power of learning, and applies this to an object of cognition, it is called Truth. Finally, as the Good, it creates, rules, and completes; as the Beautiful, it illuminates and pours forth pleasure.

Beauty is the Radiance of the Divine Goodness, and God is the Center of Four Circles.

Chapter III

The ancient theologians were not far wrong when they placed Goodness in the center and Beauty on the circumference of a circle; goodness, I say, is in a single center, and Beauty is in four circles. The single center of everything is God. Around this continually revolve four circles: Mind, Soul, Nature, and Matter. Mind is a fixed circle; Soul moves of itself; Nature moves in another, but not by another; and Matter moves both by another and in another. I shall explain why we call God the center[14] of them all, and why we call these four "circles."

"actus per temporis momenta discurrens," the "vis interna movendi." Throughout the *Commentary* runs the assumption, made clear in *Theol. Plat.,* VIII, c. 14, that function equals being. "Sicut enim essentiae actus est esse, atque intellectus ipsius actus est intelligere, sic vitae actus vivere"—*Theol. Plat.,* VI, II. (Cf. also Parmenides in Diels, *op. cit.* p. 121.) Life, however, is eternal only in the sense of a continuous circle in the realm of time. Pure Being, which is God, is above time, above life, and above being in the worldly sense. "Deus est actus, non alterius, non circa alterum, sed suimet, et circa seipsum; est enim actus infra se manens"—*Theol. Plat.,* II, 12, p. 109 (Saitta, p. 95). "Deus ipse est essentia rerum, vita, virtus, actio, perseveratio, perfectio, divintas"—*Opera,* II, p. 1113 (Saitta, p. 97). This broad view of God is not Platonic or Neoplatonic, but Christian: God the eternal creator (Saitta, p. 145). It is the effect of his reading in the patristics, e.g. Clement of Alexandria, but also, in great measure, of the influence of Gemisthus Pletho (Saitta, p. 98).

12 *Argonautica* 303-309.

13 The bracketed passage is in the Italian only.

14 The theory that God is the center of the universe is from Plotinus, who used the figure to explain God as a unity in multiplicity. As Hasse points out, the more exact image is that of the axis of a spiral, since all the worlds revolve "in toward" God as much as possible. Ficino expounds the theory in the *Theol. Plat.,* XVIII, c. 3, p. 403: "Ita centrum Deus est omnium, quia sic est in omnibus, ut cuique rei interior sit quam ipsamet sibi . . . Ut est centrum quidem est in omnibus, ut circumferentia vero, est extra omnia. In omnibus inquam non inclusus quia est

The center of the circle is a point, single, indivisible, and stationary. From it, many divisible mobile lines strike out to their respective circumferences. This divisible circumference revolves around the center as though on a hinge, and the nature of the center is such that, although it is single, indivisible, and fixed, nevertheless, it is found in many or, rather, all of the separate moving lines, for in every direction that point is in one of the lines. But since nothing can be touched by anything unlike itself, the lines drawn from the circumference to the center cannot touch a midpoint of this kind except as each one touches one certain, simple, motionless midpoint of its own. Who will deny that God is rightly called the center of everything, since He is located, single, simple, and motionless within them all; but that everything that is produced from Him is multiple, complex, and movable, and that as these things flow from Him, they flow back to Him in the image of the lines and circumference? Thus Mind, Soul, Nature, and Matter, proceeding from God, strive to return to Him, and they revolve toward Him from every possible direction. Just as the central point is found everywhere in the lines and in the whole circle, and through this central point, the separate lines touch the middle point of the circle, so God, the center of everything, who is the simplest unity and the purest actuality, is infused into everything—not only because He is present to the whole, but also because He endowed everything He created with some particular function or power, completely simple and distinctive, which is called the identity of that thing, and from which and to which, as from and to its own center [God], the rest of its parts and powers hang. It is certainly fitting that these things, as soon as they have been created, should gather around their own center, this identity of their own, before they turn to their creator, so that through their own center they may cling, as we have now several times repeated, to the center of everything. The Angelic Mind rises to its own apex and head before it ascends to God, and it is the same with the Soul and the other two circles. Of those invisible circles of the Mind, that is, and of the Soul, and of Nature, this visible circle of the material world is an image, for bodies are the shadows and traces of souls and minds, and shadows and traces show the shape of the thing which they represent.

Therefore, these four realms are rightly called four circles. The Angelic Mind is immovable because its operation, like its essence, remains always the same and it functions in the same way; it always thinks in the same way and all its volitions are alike; it can be called movable[15] only in the fact that proceeding from God, like everything else, it turns toward Him.

The World-Soul, and any other soul, is a movable circle, for of its very nature it learns [only] in circulating [among ideas], and it functions in the

et circumferentia. Extra omnia quoque non esclusus, quia est centrum. Quid ergo Deus est? Ut ita dixerim circulus spiritalis, cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam." Cf. Saitta, p. 103.

15 According to Saitta, Ficino derived his theory of the extra-spacial and extra-temporal nature of the Angelic Mind from Proclus (Saitta, p. 202).

passage of time. Its shifting from one subject to another and its temporal operation are undoubtedly called motion; in fact, if there is any stability in the learning process of the Soul, it exists more through the influence of the Mind than because of the nature of the Soul.

Nature also is a movable circle. When we say *Soul,*[16] we mean the power of reason and sensation, in the manner of ancient theologians; when we say *Nature,*[17] we mean the generative power of the Soul. The former power in us they rightly called Man, and the latter only the image and imitation of man. This faculty of procreation is therefore well called movable because it carries out its work in the space of time, but it differs from that property [of Reason] in the Soul in this, that the Soul is moved *through* and *in* itself: "Through itself," I say, because it is itself the source of motion; and "in itself" also because the operation of reason and the senses resides in the very essence of the Soul; hence, they do not necessarily have any function in the body.

That generative force which we call Nature is also moved *through* itself, since it is one of the powers of the soul, which is (as we have said) moved through itself; but nevertheless it is said to be moved *in* something else, because its every operation is restricted to the body, which it nourishes, increases, and propagates.

But Corporeal Matter is a circle movable both *by* another and *in* another: "by another," because it is necessarily moved only by soul; and "in another," because the motion of a body is brought about in the space of place. We can now clearly understand why the ancient theologians agree in placing Goodness in the center, and Beauty on the circumference. The goodness of all things is the one God himself, through whom everything partakes of good. Beauty, then, is the light of God infused in these four circles revolving, so to speak, around God. This light forms in those four circles all the images of every thing. Those images we call, in the Mind, Ideas; in the Soul, Concepts; in Nature, Seeds;[18] and in Matter, Shapes. Thus in the four circles we see four splendors: in the first, the splendor of Ideas; in the second, that of Concepts; in the third, that of Seeds; and in the last, that of Shapes.

16 See note 21, First Speech.

17 "Nature" or, as it was called earlier, the "World-Body" is not something chaotic, indeterminate, and transitory, but appears as a great animal (Saitta, p. 145f). It is the active faculty of the World-Soul, its outer life. It is that which, added to matter, gives it substantiality. It is the lowest of the spiritual existences (Inge, I, pp. 155-162). Here again Ficino is leaning on an etymology, pushing the Greek word *φύσις*, Latin *natura,* for the meaning of the Greek verb *φύω*.

18 "Seeds" are the *λόγοι σπερματικοί* of Plotinus, who borrowed the term from the Stoic philosophy, where it means the forming factor in formless matter (Collins, p. 10). However, the *energia seminaria* which Ficino identifies with nature, is not simply potentiality, but potentiality and actuality, because seeds never produce as perfectly as pure potentiality would (Saitta, p. 146).

How Plato Explains Divinity.

Chapter IV

Plato explained this mystery in a letter to King Dionysius,[19] when he affirmed that God is the source of everything beautiful, the beginning and origin, so to speak, of all beauty:[20]

> About[21] the King of all are all things, and they exist for his sake.[22] He is the cause of everything beautiful. About the Second are the second things, and about the Third, the third. What these things are, the human soul tries to learn by looking at things of the same sort as itself, none of which is adequate. About the King Himself and the things of which I spoke, nothing is of that sort. What follows this the soul says.

"About the King" means not within the King, but outside him, for in God there is no complexity. What that word "about" really means, Plato explains when he adds that everything exists "because of God." He Himself is "the cause of everything beautiful," as much as to say, "Around the King of all are all things because everything of its very nature turns to God as its own end, just as it was produced from that source."

"Of all beautiful things," that is, of all Beauty, which shines out in the circles mentioned. For the shapes of things are led back to God through seeds, these through concepts, and these through Ideas, and they are produced from God in the same stages. Quite rightly, then, when Plato speaks of "all things" he means the sum of Ideas, because in them the rest are included.

"The second about the Second, and the third about the Third." Zoroaster[23] posited three world-rulers, the masters of three orders: Onomasis,

19 "Dionysius" refers to King Dionysius the younger, of Sicily, who succeeded his father in 367 B. C. as Tyrant of Syracuse. Most of Plato's thirteen letters now extant are considered spurious, particularly the first, ninth, and twelfth. Ficino seems to have been aware of their dubious origin, as is indicated by his suggestion that the first epistle was probably written by Dion (Loeb, p. 393), but he probably did not question the authenticity of the second epistle from which this passage comes (*Ep.* ii, 312E), since even some modern scholars accept it as genuine (see introduction in Loeb edition, pp. 386-393).

20 The ensuing quoted passage is one of the chief reasons for the assumption that the whole epistle is spurious. Cf. Loeb, pp. 398-401, where Bury summarizes the internal evidence and lists the several most common interpretations of this "riddle," which he calls a piece of "wanton mystification." Cf., also, Shorey, *What Plato Said,* pp. 40-50.

21 *About* translates the Latin *Circa* which translates the Greek περί. The word *about* is an attempt to include both senses of the original word: the sense of *around,* as Ficino takes it, eagerly sacrificing the allegorical meaning of the expression to his own interpretation; and the sense of *concerning,* or *related to,* which Bury, Jowett, and Shorey adopt for the word throughout the passage.

22 The Italian *per cagione di lui* indicates that Ficino means by *gratia,* to translate the Greek ἕνεκα as *because of,* not *for his sake,* as the passage has usually been rendered.

23 Zoroastrianism itself was dualistic. Its two deities were Ormuzd (or Ormazd), the Good, and Ahriman, the Bad (Light and Dark). Mithra is another

Mithris, and Arimanis. These Plato calls God, Mind, and Soul, and he posits three categories of divine Forms: Ideas, Concepts, and Seeds. The first type, that is, the Ideas, therefore, revolve around the first, that is, God, since they are given to the Mind by God, and they draw back to Him the Mind to which they were given. The second type revolves around the second, that is, the Concepts revolve around the Mind, since they cross the Mind into the Soul, and attract the Soul toward the Mind. The third type revolves around the third, that is, the Seeds of things around the Soul, for they go through the Soul into Nature, that is, into the power of generation, and again join Nature to the Soul. In the same order forms descend from Nature into Matter, but Plato does not include them in the order listed here because Dionysius' inquiry[24] was about the divine,[25] and Plato explains as divine the three orders pertaining to the incorporeal Ideas, but he leaves out corporeal forms. He was unwilling to call God the first King, but rather he called him "the King of all," lest he should seem perchance, if he called Him "the First," to put Him in some kind of numerical order on a level of equality with subordinate leaders. Moreover, he does not say that the first things only revolve around Him, but rather that the whole does, lest we think that He is the governor of some one of the three orders rather than King of the whole universe.

"The human soul tries to understand what these are." In close order after these three splendors of the divine beauty shining in the three circles, he adds love of the soul for them; for thence the passion of the soul is kindled. For it is certainly appropriate that the divine seek divine things, "by looking at what is related to itself." Since human thought rises from the senses, we invariably judge the divine on the basis of what seems to us highest in physical bodies. In the strength of corporeal bodies we look for the power of God; in their orderliness we look for His wisdom; and in their usefulness, for His goodness.

Moreover, Plato speaks of the shapes of bodies as related to the soul, as though next of kin, for the shapes of bodies are ranked in the next level after the soul. "Of these things none is adequate." Forms of this kind

Deity found in the Vedas as well as in the Avesta. The way in which the two cults became associated is very complicated. The Persians kept Mithra as a god after they had acquired the Zoroastrian gods, with the argument that Ormuzd had made Mithra equal to himself (Hasse, pp. 230-31, note 16).

24 Dionysius' inquiry was not, strictly speaking, about the divine, but about "the first," περὶ τοῦς τοῦ πρώτον φύσεως. Plato, *Ep.* 312. Loeb, p. 410.

25 Hasse points out that Plato's meaning of the *divine* was much more abstract than it is here in its theistic sense (Hasse, p. 231, note 17). "For Plato, God is a supreme category of the moral ideal and a word of edification . . . He does not identify God with the Idea of Good, the idea of unity, the idea of pure being, the mythical Demiourgos of the *Timaeus,* or any other abstraction, principle, or symbol in his philosophy" (Shorey, *Platonism,* p. 30). For Ficino, however, God is all of these and, besides, the personality of the Christian Deity. Cf. Saitta, Chapter V, and Introduction IV, *supra,* pp. 22 ff.

neither sufficiently are divine things, nor adequately represent them to us, for the true things are the Ideas, Concepts, and Seeds, whereas the Forms of bodies seem to be the shadows of things rather than the true things themselves. In fact, just as the shadow of a body does not give a clear and exact image of the body, so the bodies themselves do not represent the true nature of the divine.

"About the King Himself, and the objects I mentioned, nothing is of that sort." How indeed can mortal things be like immortal? or the false like the true? "But the soul speaks of what follows this." That is, the soul, as long as it judges divine things by mortal, speaks falsely of divinity, and describes not divine, but mortal things.

The Divine Beauty Shines through Everything and is Loved in Everything.

Chapter V

At any rate, to put a great deal into a few words, Goodness is said to be the outstanding characteristic of God. Beauty is a kind of force or light, shining from Him through everything, first through the Angelic Mind, second through the World-Soul and the rest of the souls, third through Nature, and fourth through corporeal Matter. It fits the Mind with a system of Ideas; it fills the Soul with a series of Concepts; it sows Nature with Seeds; and it provides Matter with Forms. In much the same way, in fact, that the single light of the sun lights up four bodies, fire, air, water, and earth, so the single light of God illumines the Mind, Soul, Nature, and Matter. Anyone seeing the light in these four elements sees a beam of the sun, and through this beam is directed to the perception of the supreme light of the sun itself. In the same way, whoever sees and loves the beauty in these four, Mind, Soul, Nature, and Body, seeing the glow of God in these, through this kind of glow sees and loves God Himself.

The Passions of Lovers.

Chapter VI

Hence it happens that the passion of a lover is not quenched by the mere touch or sight of a body, for it does not desire this or that body, but desires the splendor of the divine light shining through bodies, and is amazed and awed by it. For this reason lovers never know what it is they desire or seek, for they do not know God Himself, whose subtle incense has infused into His works a certain sweet aroma of Himself; by this aroma we are certainly every day aroused. We sense the aroma certainly, but we cannot distinguish its flavor, and so when we yearn for the indistinguishable flavor itself, being charmed by its sensible aroma, certainly we do not know what we desire [and what we suffer].[26] Hence also it always happens that lovers

somehow both worship and fear the sight of the beloved. Even the brave [to speak out, though I fear that some of you will blush to hear this][26] and the wise, I say, usually suffer this effect in the presence of a loved one, even though a much inferior one. Certainly it is not a human passion which frightens them, which seizes and breaks them, for the human power [reason] is always stronger in the brave and the wise, but that glow of divinity shining in beautiful bodies, like an image of God, compels lovers to awe, trembling, and reverence.

For the same reason, because of the presence of the loved one the lover despises riches and honors and considers them worthless, for it is right that the divine be valued above the human. It also often happens that the lover wishes to transform himself into the person of the loved one. This is really quite reasonable, for he wishes and tries to become God instead of man;[27] and who would not exchange humanity for divinity?

It also happens that those snared by love alternately lament and rejoice in their love. They lament because they are losing, destroying and ruining themselves; they rejoice because they are transferring themselves into something better. They are also alternately hot and cold, like those suffering from undulant fever; people chill, of course, whose own warmth leaves them; likewise, they are hot, being touched with the glow of the eternal light. Cold gives birth to timidity and warmth to courage; therefore lovers also seem alternately timid and bold. Even the dullest are made sharper by love, for who does not see most clearly with the help of the heavenly light? But let this suffice about love itself, beauty, its origin, and its effect upon lovers.

On the Two Kinds of Love and the Double Nature of Venus.

Chapter VII

Now we must discuss briefly the two kinds of Love. Pausanias says that for Plato, Cupid was the consort of Venus, and that there are necessarily

26 Bracketed passages appear in the Latin text only.

27 The universality of this conatus to deification is discussed in *Theol. Plat.*, XIII, C.I., p. 305. "Intellect strives to understand everything. When it understands a thing, it assumes the form of that thing. Hence intellect strives, res omnes fieri, unde nititur deus fieri, in quo sunt omnia, dum nititur omnia fieri" (*Theol. Plat.*, XIV, 3). For Ficino, the whole activity of man is a striving to become God: "Deus enim quodammodo fieri potest, qui naturali instinctu cupit, studetque esse divinus" (*De Christ. Relig.*, XVI, p. 20). He takes Augustine's theory of divine man, but divests it of its dogmatic and irrational element, by making religious activity the same as rational activity. The deification of man for Ficino is not the mystic ecstasy of Plotinus, in which the man loses his identity; it is a rational changing of personality, from that of man, to that of God. Humanity and divinity are united as potentiality and actuality. We desire to become God because we are able to do so. This desire is our distinguishing characteristic. This Christian insistence upon man's becoming God adds a good deal of warmth to the emanistic doctrine of Plotinus in which God's becoming man is emphasized (Saitta, pp. 77-82). Moreover, Ficino insisted that man's union with God, once accomplished, was permanent, whereas Plotinus thought of it only as a phase in the cycle of re-incarnation.

as many Cupids as there are Venuses. Now, he mentions two Venuses, which are accompanied by two Loves. One Venus he calls the Heavenly, the other the Earthly. The Heavenly one was born of Heaven of no mother; the other was born of Jupiter and Dione.[28] The Platonists call the Supreme God Uranus because just as that sublime body, Heaven,[29] rules over and contains all bodies, so the supreme God surpasses all spirits. But the Platonists call the Angelic Mind by many names, for they speak of it now as Saturn, now as Jupiter, and now as Venus, for that Mind has essence, life, and intelligence. They call its essence Saturn, its life Jupiter, and its intelligence Venus. The World-Soul we likewise call Saturn, Jupiter, and Venus. Insofar as it understands the divine, we call it Saturn; insofar as it moves the heavens, we call it Jupiter; and insofar as it begets lower forms, we call it Venus.

The first Venus, which is in the Angelic Mind, is said to have been born of Uranus "of no mother," because for the natural philosophers, *mother* means *matter,*[30] and the Angelic Mind is completely foreign to any relationship with corporeal matter.

The second Venus, which is in the World-Soul, was born of Jupiter and Dione: born of Jupiter, that is, of that faculty of the World-Soul which moves the heavens. She it was who created the power which generates these lower forms. The philosophers attribute a mother as well as a father to this Venus because she is thought to be related to matter, since she is incorporated in the matter of the world. To sum it all up, Venus is two-fold: one is clearly that intelligence which we said was in the Angelic Mind; the other is the power of generation with which the World-Soul is endowed. Each has as consort a similar Love. The first, by innate love is stimulated to know the beauty of God; the second, by its love, to procreate the same beauty in bodies. The former Venus first embraces the Glory of God in herself, and then translates it to the second Venus. This latter Venus translates sparks of that divine glory into earthly matter. It is because of the presence of sparks of this kind that an individual body seems beautiful to us, in proportion to its merits. The human soul perceives the beauty of these bodies through the eyes.

28 There were two versions of the birth of Aphrodite in mythology. One is that she rose out of the foam of the sea where the seminal fluid fell from the castration of Uranus. Hence she is called Aphrodite Urania. The other story is that she was born of a union of Zeus and Dione. From the two myths there arose the concept of two Venuses, one heavenly, and the other earthly, as in Prodicus and Xenophanes as well as Plato (Saitta, p. 242, and Shorey, *What Plato Said,* p. 543, note 180D). This duality early acquired the moral connotation of spiritual and fleshly love which it has in Plato, the Neoplatonists, and Ficino.

29 *Caelum* in Latin means 'the sky.'

30 Hasse suggests that Ficino is inventing here an etymology of *mater* from *materia.* Plotinus (*Enneads,* III, 6, 13) points out the correspondence between matter and the so-called "nurse of all becoming" in the *Timaeus* (Steph. 49A). Cf., also, Aristotle, *Physics,* I, 9 (Hasse, p. 232, note 24).

The soul also has two powers.[31] It certainly has the power of comprehension, and it has the power of generation. These two powers in us are the two Venuses which are accompanied by their twin Loves. When the beauty of a human body first meets our eyes, the mind, which is the first Venus in us, worships and adores the human beauty as an image of the divine beauty, and through the first, it is frequently aroused to the second. But the power of generation in us, which is the second Venus, desires to create another form like this. Therefore, there is a Love in each case: in the former, it is the desire of contemplating Beauty; and in the latter, the desire of propagating it; both loves are honorable and praiseworthy, for each is concerned with the divine image.

Of what, therefore, does Pausanias disapprove in love? I shall tell you. If a man is too eager for procreation and gives up contemplation, or is immoderately desirous of copulation with women, or consorts unnaturally with men,[32] or prefers the beauty of the body to that of the soul, insofar he abuses the dignity of love. It is this abuse of love which Pausanias censures. Therefore, a man who properly respects love praises, of course, the beauty of the body; but through it he contemplates the more excellent beauty of the soul, the mind, and God, and admires and loves this more fervently than the other. Moreover, he performs the functions of generation and coition within the bounds prescribed by natural law and civil laws drawn up by men of wisdom. On this subject Pausanias speaks at greater length.

Exhortation to Love. On Simple and Mutual Love.

Chapter VIII

I urge and beg you all, my friends, to embrace immediately this love, a thing certainly divine, with all your strength and be not deterred by what they say Plato said about a certain lover: "That lover," he said, "is a soul dead in its own body and living in that of another." Likewise, be not dismayed by what Orpheus perchance sang about the wretched and deplorable lot of lovers, for I shall tell you next, if you please, how these grievances are to be understood, and how it is possible to remedy them, so listen carefully.

Plato calls love "something bitter," and correctly so, because whoever

31 These two powers of the soul are the same as those which Ficino analyzes in the *Theol. Platonica* as the intellect and the will. Fundamentally the volitive activity seeks the same end as the intellectual activity: "Utraque . . . fiunt quidem omnia, intellectus omnia vera, voluntas omnia bona, sed intellectus res in seipsum transferendo illis unitur, voluntas contra in res transferendo seipsam" (*Theol. Plat.,* XIV, 3, p. 310). The two faculties correspond perfectly to the universal and particular respectively (Saitta, p. 218).

32 For discussion of the much vituperated subject of παιδεραστία, see Lagerborg, R., *Platonische Liebe,* Leipzig, 1926, Chapter IV, and Rettig, G. F., "Knabenliebe und Frauenliebe in Platons *Symposion,*" *Philologus,* XLI, (1882), 414-444. Cited by Shorey, *What Plato Said,* p. 544. Also Symonds, John Addington, *A Problem in Greek Ethics,* London, 1901.

loves dies. Orpheus calls it "bitter-sweet"[33] because love is voluntary death. Insofar as it is death, it is bitter, and insofar as it is voluntary, it is sweet. He who loves, dies; for his consciousness, oblivious of himself, is devoted exclusively to the loved one, and a man who is not conscious *of* himself is certainly not conscious *in* himself.[34] Therefore, a soul that is so affected does not function in itself, because the primary function of the soul is consciousness. The soul which does not function in itself does not exist in itself, for function and existence are equivalent.[35] There can be no existence without function, and function cannot survive existence itself; a thing cannot function when it does not exist, and whenever it does exist it functions. Therefore, the soul of a lover does not exist within the man himself, because it does not function in him. If it does not exist in him, it also does not live in him, and he who does not live is dead. Therefore, everyone who loves is dead in himself. But at least he lives in the other person, does he not? Certainly.

There are these two kinds of love: one simple, the other reciprocal. Simple love occurs when the loved one does not return his lover's affections. In this case the lover is completely dead, for he neither lives in himself, as we have already sufficiently proved, nor does he live in his loved one, since he is rejected by him. Where, then does he live? In air, water, fire, earth, or in some animal carcass? In none of these, for the human soul does not live in any but a human body. Will it perhaps eke out an existence in the body of some other person whom it does not love? No, not there either, for if it does not live in that in which it most fiercely desires to live, how can it live in any other? Therefore, the unrequited lover lives nowhere; he is completely dead. Moreover, he never comes back to life unless indignation revives him.

But when the loved one loves in return, the lover leads his life in him. Here, surely, is a remarkable circumstance that whenever two people are brought together in mutual affection, one lives in the other and the other in him. In this way they mutually exchange identities; each gives himself to the other in such a way that each receives the other in return. How they can give themselves up while oblivious of themselves, I can see; but how one receives the other, I do not understand; for a man who does not even have possession of himself will that much less take possession of someone else.

The truth must rather be that each has himself and has the other, too.

33 Listed as fragment No. 316 in Abel, p. 272. Hasse points out that this has a special meaning for "Orpheus" and is applied as a nickname for love, rather than as a descriptive adjective. Cf. Musaeus, *Hero and Leander,* 116 (Hasse, p. 232, note 27). The Italian reads *un pome dolce amaro.*

34 This introduces a passage of the kind of Neoplatonic dialectic which aroused Shorey to label it "the indeterminate and uncontrolled concatenation of equivocal and ambiguous words in long chains of unverified and unverifiable ratiocinations" (Shorey, *Platonism,* p. 38).

35 Cf. note 11, *supra,* Saitta, p. 199, and *Phaedrus,* 245D.

A has himself, but in B; and B also has himself, but in A. When you love me, you contemplate me, and as I love you, I find myself in your contemplation of me; I recover myself, lost in the first place by own neglect of myself, in you, who preserve me. You do exactly the same in me. And then this, too, is remarkable: that after I have lost myself, if I recover myself through you, I have myself through you, and if I have myself through you, I have you sooner and to a greater degree than I have myself. I am therefore closer to you than I am to myself, since I keep a grasp on myself only through you as a mediary.

It is in this that the power of Cupid differs from the force of Mars; indeed it is in this way that military power and love differ: the general possesses others through himself; the lover takes possession of himself through another, and the farther each of the lovers is from himself, the nearer he is to the other, and though he is dead in himself, he comes to life again in the other. In fact, there is only one death in mutual love, but there are two resurrections, for a lover dies within himself the moment he forgets about himself, but he returns to life immediately in his loved one as soon as the loved one embraces him in loving contemplation. He is resurrected once more when he finally recognizes himself in his beloved and no longer doubts that he is loved.

O, happy death, which is followed by two lives. O, wondrous exchange in which each gives himself up for the other, and has the other, yet does not cease to have himself. O, inestimable gain, when two so become one, that each of the two, instead of one alone, becomes two, and as though doubled, he who had one life before, with a death intervening, has now two. For a man who dies once and is twice resurrected has exchanged one life for two and his single self for two selves.

Certainly there is a most just vengeance in reciprocal love, for a homicide must be punished by death, and who will deny that a man who is loved is a homicide since he robs the loving one of his soul? So, likewise, who will deny that that man himself dies when he loves in return the person who loves him? This is a restitution which is certainly due, when each returns to the other the soul he has taken. Each gives up his own to his lover, but by loving in return restores the other through his own. Therefore, anyone who is loved ought in very justice to love in return, and he who does not love his lover must bear the charge of homicide, nay, rather the triple charge of thief, homicide, and desecrator. Money is possessed by the body, the body by the soul, and therefore the man who takes captive a soul, by which both body and money are possessed, thus seizes all three at once: soul, body, and money. Hence it happens that, like a thief, homicide, and desecrator, he is punishable by triple death, and, as though naturally wicked and immoral, he may be killed by anyone with impunity, unless he obeys that law of his own accord, that is, by loving his lover. When his lover dies, he will likewise die, and when his lover returns to life a second time, he will also. In the

argument just given, it is conclusively proved that the beloved ought to love his lover in return, not only ought, but must; as is shown.

Likeness generates love.[36] Similarity is a certain sameness of nature in several things. If I am like you, you are necessarily like me; therefore, the same similarity which compels me to love you, forces you to love me. Moreover, a lover withdraws from himself and gives himself to his loved one. The loved one cherishes him like a possession, for one's own possessions are very dear to him.

Moreover, a lover imprints a likeness of the loved one upon his soul, and so the soul of the lover becomes a mirror in which is reflected the image of the loved one. Thereupon, when the loved one recognizes himself in the lover, he is forced to love him.

Astrologers[37] think that the interchange of love is truly reciprocal between those at whose birth there was an exchange of the lights, that is, of the sun and moon (if, for example, at my birth, the sun were in Aries and the Moon in Liber, and at yours the sun were in Liber and the Moon in Aries); or for whom the same sign or a similar one, or the same planet or a similar one was in the ascendant; or on whom friendly planets shone on the same angle of orient; or for whom Venus was in the same mansion and in the same angle. The Platonists add the suggestion that it is those whose lives the same daemon [or certainly a similar one][38] directs. The natural and moral philosophers would have it that a likeness of complexion, upbringing, education, habit, and attitude is the cause of mutual affection. Finally, where several causes occur together, the passion between the two people is most reciprocal; but where all do, there rise up passions like those of Damon and Pythias, or Orestes and Pylades.

What Lovers Seek.

Chapter IX

In conclusion, what do these lovers seek when they love mutually? They seek beauty, for love is the desire of enjoying beauty. But beauty is a certain splendor, attracting the human soul to itself. Certainly bodily beauty is nothing but splendor in the ornament of colors and lines. Beauty of the soul also is splendor in a harmony of knowledge and morals. That bodily glow, neither the ears, nor the sense of smell, nor taste, nor touch perceives, but only the eye. If the eye alone recognizes, it alone enjoys. Therefore, the eye alone enjoys the beauty of the body. Since love is nothing more than the desire of enjoying beauty, and beauty is perceived by the eyes alone, the lover of the body is content with the sight alone. Indeed the lust to

36 Cf. the discussion on this topic in the *Lysis*, 214.

37 Cf. astrological effects on the lovers in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale." For Ficino's analysis of the relationship between astrology and love, see Speech V, Chapter viii, where also are explained the astrological terms used here.

38 Bracketed passage in the Latin only.

touch the body is not a part of love, nor is it the desire of the lover, but rather a kind of wantonness and the derangement of a servile man.

Further, we comprehend that light (and beauty) of the soul with the mind alone. Therefore, he who loves the beauty of the soul is content with mental perceptions alone. Lovers exchange beauty for beauty. A man enjoys the physical beauty of a youth with his eyes; the youth enjoys the man's beauty with his mind. The youth, who is beautiful in body only, by this practice becomes beautiful also in soul; the man, who is beautiful in soul only, feasts his eyes upon bodily beauty. Truly this is a wonderful exchange, equally honourable, beneficial and pleasant to both: equally honourable, indeed, to both, for it is equally honourable to learn and to teach. The pleasure is greater in the older man since he is pleased both in sight and intelligence, but the benefit is greater in the younger, for as much as the soul is more excellent than the body, so much is the acquisition of the beauty of the soul more valuable than of that of the body. Thus far we have given the speech of Pausanias; let us now interpret that of Eryximachus.

THIRD SPEECH

Love is in Everything, for Everything, and is the Creator and Teacher of Everything.

Chapter I

There seem to be three things according to our Eryximachus which we have to consider in their order: first, the fact that Love is inherent in everything and extends throughout everything; second, the fact that Love is the creator and preserver of all natural things; third, the fact that He is the teacher and master of each of the arts.

As a matter of fact, there are considered to be three grades of things in nature; superior, inferior, and equal things. Superior things are the causes of inferior ones, and conversely, inferior ones are the products of superior ones. Those which are on a plane of equality are endowed with like natures. Now, the creators of things love their creations as parts and images of themselves; the creations likewise love their authors as their preservers. But things on a level of equality are bound to each other by mutual affection, as though they were identical parts of one and the same body.

Therefore, God benevolently governs the Angelic Mind, the Angelic Mind and God together govern the Soul; and the Soul, along with these two, rules and governs bodies with a certain natural affection. In this the affection of the superior for the inferior is clearly seen.

Again, bodies are most eagerly attached to their souls, and are separated from them with the greatest reluctance. Our souls desire the bliss of heavenly beings, and heavenly beings happily worship the majesty of the supreme divinity, and here is the passion of love in inferior beings for their supreme sources.

Again, all the parts of fire freely and mutually coalesce, and so with the parts of earth, water, and air; so likewise with every kind of animal: animals of the same kind always flock together instinctively. Here is illustrated love for equal and similar things.

Who, then, will doubt that love for everything is innate in everything? That is exactly what Dionysius the Areopagite in his book *De Nominibus Divinis* meant by those words which he quotes from Hierotheus:

> Whether we call it divine, angelic, spiritual, animal, or natural, we mean by love a certain joining and uniting force which moves even the higher to care for the lower, brings equals into mutual intercourse with each other, and finally, admonishes the inferior to devote themselves to the higher and stronger.[1]

This is what Dionysius said.

1 *De Nominibus Divinis,* 15 (cited by Hasse, p. 233, note 1).

Love is the Author and Preserver of Everything.

Chapter II

The second part of our speech, in which Love is called the author and preserver of everything, is proved in the following way: The desire of a thing for the propagation of its own perfection is a kind of love. Absolute perfection consists in the supreme power of God. This perfection the divine intelligence contemplates, and hence the divine will desires to generate the same perfection beyond itself; because of this love of propagation, everything was created by Him. On this subject our Dionysius says, "Divine Love did not permit the king of the universe to remain in Himself without issue."

That first author endowed everything with the same instinct for procreation. Because of this instinct, the holy spirits move the heavens and bestow their gifts upon everything beneath them. Because of this, the stars spread their light among the elements. Because of this, fire attracts air through mutual participation in its own heat, so air attracts water; water, earth; and vice versa, earth attracts water to itself; water, the air; and air, the fire. In the same way, plants and trees, also desirous of propagating their own seed, bear offspring like themselves. Brute animals also, and men, carried away by the charms of the same passion, are aroused to the procreation of offspring.

But if Love creates everything, He also preserves everything, for the functions of creation and preservation always belong together. Certainly like things are preserved by like, and moreover, Love attracts the like to the like.[2] Every part of the earth, joined by mutual love, links itself with other parts of earth like itself. The whole earth, also, is drawn toward the center of the world like itself, because of its desire for it. And so the parts of water are likewise brought to each other and with the whole body of water, to a place agreeable to them. The parts of air and fire perform in the same way, and these two elements also are drawn to an upper region similar and suited to them by love of that region.[3] Heaven also, as Plato says in his book *The Politicus,* is moved by an innate love, for the whole heavenly Soul at once is in every point in heaven. Heaven, wishing (so much) to enjoy[4] the Soul, revolves so that it may enjoy the whole soul through all of its parts. Moreover, it flies at top speed in order to be at every point, as much as possible exactly at the same moment when the

2 Cf. the argument in the *Lysis* on the question of whether like persons or unlike more easily fall in love, a question, as Shorey says, "much debated in the courts of love in the Renaissance" (*What Plato Said,* p. 117). Shorey's reference is not to medieval "courts of love" (Lewis, pp. 1-43), but to renaissance court customs (cf. Prouty, chapter v).

3 Cf. Aristotle's *Physics,* IV, c. 5 (cited by Hasse, p. 233, note 2).

4 The "enjoyment" of supra-sensible objects, especially God, is a Neoplatonic term which came into the vocabulary of Christian thinkers through Augustine (Hasse, p. 233, note 3).

whole soul is there. In addition to this, the concave face of the larger sphere is the natural location of the smaller, and because every part of the latter sphere is in conjunction with every part of the former, each point of one desires to touch all the points of the other. Now, if the Heavens remained at rest, single points would touch single points, instead of each part touching all of them. By keeping in motion, it attains most nearly what it could not attain if it were stationary. Moreover, it keeps in the swiftest motion so that each point may touch every other point as nearly at the same instant as possible.

In addition, everything is preserved by a unity of its parts; and with their dispersion, it dies. But the unity of parts is brought about by mutual love. This may be seen in the humors of our bodies, and in the elements of the world, by the harmony of which, according to Empedocles the Pythagorean,[5] both our bodies and the world hold together, and by the disharmony of which they disintegrate; but natural love produces harmony for them. Hence Orpheus says, "Thou, alone, O, Love, of all these things holdest the reins."[6]

That Love is the Teacher and Ruler of the Arts.

Chapter III

After this discussion it remains for us to show in what way Love is the teacher and master of all the arts. We shall easily understand that He is indeed the teacher of the arts if only we consider that no one can ever discover or invent a new art except as the pleasure of investigation and the desire of finding [the truth][7] motivate him; and except as he who teaches loves his students, and as those students most eagerly thirst after that learning.

Moreover, Love is justly called Ruler of the Arts, for a man fashions works of art carefully and completes them thoroughly, who esteems highly both the works themselves and the people for whom they are made. There is, then, this fact, that artists in each of the arts seek after and care for nothing but love.

Let us now briefly run through those arts which Eryximachus lists in Plato. With what else does Medicine deal than the way in which the four humors of the body become and remain mutual friends; and what foods and

5 For Empedocles the two fundamental elements were love and hostility (*φιλία* and *νεῖκος*). Simplicius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, VIII, 258, says, "*ὑπέθετο Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ποιητικὰ αἴτια τὴν φιλίαν διὰ τῆς ἑνώσεως . . . τὸ δὲ νεῖκος διὰ τῆς διακρίσεως.*" Cf. Sext. Emp. *Adv. Mathem.* X, 10. Hasse thinks Ficino's error in calling Empedocles a Pythagorean is due to Empedocles' theory of the wandering of the soul (p. 233, note 4).

6 Orpheus, *Hymn to Eros*, LVIII, 8, "*μοῦνος γὰρ τούτων πάντων οἴηκα κρατύνεις.*" The translation given is of Ficino's free Latin translation of the Greek, which reads, literally, "helm," not "reins."

7 *il vero* in Italian does not appear in the Latin.

drinks and other necessities of life or what types of remedy nature loves and requires? Here also those two loves, the Heavenly and the Earthly, which Pausanias had distinguished above,[8] Eryximachus comes upon through a kind of coincidence; for a temperate complexion of the body has a moderate love for moderate and agreeable things, but an intemperate complexion has an opposite love for opposite things. The former, of course, ought to be indulged, but the latter ought never to be submitted to, but ought to be investigated in gymnastic exercise, to see which bodily habits it prefers and demands, which methods of exercising and which gestures; in agriculture, to see what kind of soil, seeds, and cultivation it demands, or what method of cultivation is preferred by certain trees.

It may likewise be observed in music,[9] in which artists investigate what ratios love, to a greater or lesser degree, what other ratios;[10] they find the least affection between the first and second steps in the scale and between the first and the seventh. They find a rather strong affinity between the first and third, fourth, fifth, or sixth, but the strongest between the first and eighth. By certain intervals and modes[11] they make high and low voices,[12] naturally different, blend together better. From this, smoothness and sweetness of harmony derive. They so resolve slower and faster tempos that they become the fastest friends and produce agreeable rhythms.

But there are said to be two types of melody in music: one serious and steady, the other soft and sensuous. The former is beneficial to those who

8 *Supra*, Speech II, chapter vii.

9 Ficino includes Music in the trilogy with Theology and Medicine, considering the three fields of knowledge necessary to maintenance of health of the Soul, Spirit, and Body. Music was important as a healing agent because it created a harmony of the parts, which was regarded as the basis of health. For Ficino it was significant that Apollo was the god both of medicine and music, and he must have been familiar with the classic examples of the healing powers of music: those of Pythias and Empedocles, Timotheus and Alexander, and David and Saul. *Post theologiae vel medicinae studia*, Ficino wrote to Canigiani, *gravioribus fidibus cantibusque frequenter incumbo, ut caetera sensuum oblectamenta penitus negligam, molestias animae corporisque expellam, mentem ad sublimia Deumque pro viribus erigam, auctoritate Mercurii Platonisque fretus, qui musicam nobis a Deo concessam dicunt ad domandum corpus, temperandum animum, Deumque laudandum* (Della Torre, pp. 790-92).

10 *Numeros* here "refers to to the Pythagorean ratios in the standard Medieval manner . . . the discussion which follows refers to their application to form pitches, which in turn combine to form the intervals of which he speaks. The classification of intervals, though it traces back to the Pythagorean ratios through such writers as Boethius, was actually first evolved during the twelfth century as music began to be written in more than one part. To this day we continue to classify the intervals from the first to second and first to seventh steps of the scale as dissonances, and the others as more or less perfect consonances." The editor is indebted for technical advice on all musical matters in the *Commentary* to Dr. Leonard Ellinwood, director of the Music Division of the Library of Congress and authority on Medieval and Renaissance music.

11 The Italian reads *modi*.

12 "High voices" referred to the lowest in pitch, and "low voices" to the highest in pitch, because of the position of the strings in the ancient cithara.

hear it; the latter, Plato says, (in the *Republic* and the *Laws*) is harmful. In the *Symposium* he assigns to the former the name Urania, and to the latter, Polymnia. Some prefer the first type and others the second. The love of the former people ought to be indulged, and the sounds which they long for should be invited; but the desire of the latter should be resisted, for the passion of the former is heavenly love, and that of the latter, earthly love.

There is a kind of friendship among the stars and four elements which is the subject matter of astronomy.[13] Here, too, these two loves are found, for there is a moderate love among them in which they blend their forces together most temperately; and there is also an immoderate love in which each of them loves itself too much and leaves the others, so to speak. From the moderate love derive a pleasant temperature in the air, tranquillity of the sea, fertility of the earth, and health of animals; from the immoderate, the opposite conditions.

Finally, the power of seers and prophets seems to consist principally in this, that they tell us what services of man are agreeable to God, how men become friends of God, and what kind of love and reverence is to be shown toward God, one's own country, and one's own parents, and to others both living and dead.

It is possible to infer the same thing in the rest of the arts and to conclude summarily that Love is in everything, and for everything, that He is the creator and preserver of everything and the teacher and master of all the arts.

The divine Orpheus justly called Him, "inventive of mind, double-natured, holding the keys to everything."[14] You have already heard how Love is "double-natured" from both Pausanias and Eryximachus. Now we can well understand from what has been said why He is said by Orpheus "to hold the keys to the world." As we have shown, this desire for the spread of its own perfection which is innate in everything, explains the innate and latent fecundity of everything. This desire compels seeds to sprout out into shoots; it draws out from the heart of each thing the powers of that thing, and conceives offspring; and opening the thing as though with a kind of key, it leads the offspring forth into the light.

Wherefore, all the parts of the world, because they are the works of one artist, the parts of one creation, like each other in life and essence, are bound to each other by a certain mutual affection so that it may justly be said that love is a perpetual knot and binder of the world, the immovable support of its parts and the firm foundation of the whole creation.

13 The Italian reads *astrologia.*
14 Orpheus, *Hymn to Eros,* LVIII, 4.

No Part of the World Hates Another Part.[15]

Chapter IV

If this is so, no parts of this creation are capable of being inimical among themselves in any way. Fire, for example, does not flee water out of hatred of it, but out of love for itself, lest it be extinguished by the coldness of the water. Nor does water extinguish fire out of hatred for fire; but out of a certain desire for multiplying its own cold, it is stimulated to create water like itself out of the material of the fire. For, since every natural desire tends to good and not to evil, the aim of water is, not to extinguish fire, which is an evil desire, but to propagate water like itself, which is a good desire. If water could accomplish this without the destruction of fire, it certainly would not destroy fire.

The same principle applies to other things which seem opposite and inimical. For example, the lamb does not hate the life and form of the wolf,[16] but he is fearful of his own ruin, which is brought about by the wolf. Conversely, the wolf does not rend and devour the lamb out of hatred for him, but of love for himself. Likewise, man does not hate man, but only the vices of man; nor do we envy the stronger and wiser their gifts out of hatred for them, but out of solicitude for ourselves, fearing lest we completely succumb to them. For this reason, there is no denying the fact that love is in everything and penetrates through everything.

Therefore, let us certainly fear this great God, because He is everywhere, dwelling in the inner life of everything, like a great lord from whose power we cannot escape, or an omniscient judge from whom we cannot hide our thoughts. Let us venerate Him like a father because He is the creator and preserver of all things; let us revere Him like a tutor and guardian; let us follow Him as a teacher because He instructs us in each of the arts. By Him as our author we live and have our being, through Him as our saviour we have everlasting life, by Him as our guardian and judge we are governed, and by Him as our teacher, we are taught and trained to live happily and well.

15 This is the central point of Ficino's philosophy: that the world is organized and run on the principle of love, that love is its unity as well as the motivation of each of its parts. The apparent sophistication of the argument in this chapter perhaps conceals, for the modern reader, the sincerity and profundity of Ficino's conviction that the whole of life is love. The all-inclusiveness of the concept is matched by nothing before the time of our absolute Idealism.
16 Cf. the wolf image in the *Phaedrus,* 241D.

FOURTH SPEECH

The Myth of Plato on the Ancient Nature of Man is Explained.

Chapter I

With these words our friend drew to a conclusion. Cristoforo Landino, a most excellently learned man, whom we recognize as the most accomplished Orphic and Platonic poet of our times, followed him in this manner, setting about to explain the obscure and involved speech of Aristophanes:

Although Giovanni Cavalcanti, by his careful explanation, has partially saved us from a lengthy discussion, nevertheless the argument of Aristophanes, since it is involved in most obscure language, still requires some explanation and clarification.

Love, says Aristophanes, is, before all other gods, exceedingly beneficent to humanity, the guardian and protector, as well as the physician, of mankind. We ought first of all to see what the nature of man once was and what were his passions, for he was not then what he is now, but was very different.

In the beginning, there were three kinds of human beings, not only the two which we have now, male and female, but also a third which was a combination of both. Moreover, the appearance of each person was whole and round, having a round back and sides, four hands, and an equal number of legs. Likewise he had two faces, completely identical, and joined on a round neck. The male sex was born from the sun, the female from the earth. The bi-sexuals came from the moon, and because of this, they were proud of spirit and robust of body; wherefore they tried to give battle to the gods and ascend to heaven. Therefore, Jupiter cut each one lengthwise, splitting each one, like those who cut eggs with a hair,[1] and threatened that if ever again they were seen revolting in pride against the gods, he would again divide them in the same way. After the nature of man was thus divided, each part desired its other half, so they ran to each other, and throwing their arms about each other, they embraced, trying to recover their original form. Moreover, they would have perished of privation and inactivity if God had not furnished them a means of intercourse.

Hence mutual love, the restorer of their original nature, is innate in all men, striving to make the two one again, and to heal the natures of men. For each of us, since we are split, is a half-man, like the little fish called[2] psettae or goldfish, which when torn apart become two from one, whereupon

1 "Today in southern Mediterranean countries, hard-boiled eggs and butter are still cut with pieces of horsehair" (Hasse, p. 234, note 1). In this passage of the *Symposium* the early church fathers found the doctrine of original sin and used it as one of their arguments to prove that Platonism was Christian.

2 Hasse suggests that these are names made up for the occasion because Ficino knew no better explanation (Hasse, p. 234, note 2). The Italian reads only *oratae,* or 'gold fish.'

each seeks its other half. Thus, whenever one half meets its own half of whichever sex it may be desirous, it is most violently aroused, clings to the half with burning love, and will not suffer a moment's separation from it. This desire of restoring the whole—this force—has received the name of Love. This Love is the greatest blessing to us, for the present when it unites with its own each of the once most intimate halves, and for the future when it proposes to those of us who piously worship God, to make us most blessed by restoring us to our former shapes and healing us.

Plato's Opinion of the Original Form of Man.

Chapter II

Aristophanes tells about these and many other like prodigies and marvels under which, as though under some kind of cloth we must consider that divine mysteries are veiled, for it was the custom of ancient theologians to conceal their sacred, holy secrets in the shadowy guise of allegories lest they be desecrated by the profane and impure. But we do not think that every single detail of what has been represented in the allegories of the preceding speech and by the other speakers is pertinent to their meaning. For Aurelius Augustine[3] says that not everything that is presented in an allegory must be thought to mean something, for many things are included because of their pertinence and connection for the sake of those that do mean something. The earth is plowed up by the plowshare only, but in order that this may be done, the rest of the parts are also built into the plow. This, therefore, is the sum of what is put before us to be explained.

Human beings once had three sexes, Masculine, Feminine, and Bi-Sexual. They were the offspring respectively of the Sun,[4] the Earth, and the Moon, and they were whole. But because of their insolence, when they aspired to equal God, they were cut in two; if they are insolent again, they are to be split again. Once the split is made, each half is drawn by love to the other half, so that their unity may be restored; and when this has been completed, the race of man will have found bliss.

The gist of our interpretation will be this: "Men" (that is, the souls of men) "originally" (that is, when they were created by God), "were whole" and equipped with two lights, one natural, and the other supernatural; by the natural light they beheld inferior and co-equal things; and by the supernatural light, superior things. "They aspired to equal God"; they reverted to the natural light alone. Hereupon "they were divided," and lost their supernatural light, were reduced to the natural light alone, and fell immediately into bodies. "If they become too proud, they will again be divided"; that is, if they trust too much to natural ability, that innate and natural light which remains to them will also be extinguished in some way.

3 St. Augustine, author of *De Civitate Dei.*

4 In ancient mythology the Sun was always masculine. Ficino's interpretation of this passage is Neoplatonic.

"They had three sexes: Males born from the Sun; Females, from the Earth, and Bi-sexuals from the Moon." The first type received the glow of God as Bravery, which is masculine; others as Temperance, which is feminine; others as Justice, which is Bi-sexual. These three virtues in us are the offspring of another three which God possesses. In God these three are called Sun, Moon, and Earth, but in us, Male, Bi-sexual, and Female.

"When the division was made, half was drawn by Love to the other half." When these souls, divided and plunged into bodies, first come to the age of adolescence, they are aroused by that innate and natural light which they have kept, like a kind of half of themselves, to win back, by the study of truth, that divine supernatural light, that former other half of themselves which they lost in the fall. When this has been won back, they will then be whole and blessed with the vision of God. This, therefore, will be the gist of our interpretation.

Man is the Soul Itself, and the Soul is Immortal.

Chapter III

Since the body is composed of matter and quantity, and it is the property of matter to receive, and of quantity only to be divided and extended, and since reception and division are incidents, the consequence is that the body is subject only to incidents and decay. But if any action seems to involve the body, it acts not insomuch as it is corporeal, but inasmuch as there is in the body a certain force and incorporeal quality, like the heat in a mass of fire, or the cold in a body of water, or the complexion in our bodies.[5] From these qualities certainly, the operations of our bodies arise, for it is not the fact that fire is long or wide or deep that makes fire heat, but the fact that it is hot; nor does any bigger fire make any more heat; (no, rather, because of its dispersion, less) but only the *hotter* fire [makes more heat]. Since, therefore, operations owe their existence to powers and qualities and the powers and qualities themselves do not consist of matter and quantity (though they may exist *in* matter and quantity), it follows that passivity is the property of the body, but to do or accomplish anything is the property of something incorporeal. These powers,[6] therefore, are the instruments of operation, but they are not sufficient in themselves for operation, because they are not sufficient for existence; for what lies in another is not able to sustain itself, but certainly depends upon that other. Whence it happens that qualities, because they are necessarily sustained by the body, are made and ruled by some higher essence which neither is body, nor lies in body. This is the [nature

5 According to the Medieval theory, the body was composed of a mixture of the four elements, and therefore included also a combination of the qualities of each, heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The same combination of four was integrated with the complexion of humors.

6 The Italian reads *qualita.*

of][7] soul, which is itself present and inherent in bodies but sustains itself, and gives their quality and complexion[8] to bodies. Through these two as instruments in the body and through the body, the soul exercises various functions. Hence, man is said to generate, grow, multiply, walk, stand, sit, speak, make works of art, perceive sensibly and learn, but all of these the soul itself does, and therefore man is soul. If we say that man procreates, multiplies, and grows, then the soul itself, as father and creator of the body itself procreates, multiplies, and grows. If we say that man stands, sits and speaks; then the soul holds up, bends, or moves the parts of the body. If fabrication and running are human functions, then the soul extends the hands and wields them at its will and it moves the feet; if sensation is a human function, then the soul, through the instruments of the senses as though through windows and doors, sees exterior bodies; if cognition, then the soul alone, without any instrument of the body comprehends the truth.

Therefore, everything that a man is said to do, his soul does itself; the body merely suffers it to be done; wherefore man is soul alone, and the body of man must be its instrument.

This is especially apparent in the fact that the soul carries out man's most important function, intelligence, without any bodily instrument. Through the intelligence men understand incorporeal things, but through the body they understand only things of the flesh. If the soul can function independently in any way, then it certainly has independent life and existence; it exists without body because it can function without body. If it exists independently, there must be something peculiar to it and not common to the body, since it is possible for what is peculiar to it even when separated from the mass of the body, to receive the name, *Man.* This name, since each of us is known by it throughout our lives (everyone is called Man at any age), certainly seems to stand for something which remains stable and permanent. The body [is not something stable, for it[9]] perpetually flows, rises, and falls in a continuous resolution, liquefaction, and alternate shifting [from heat to cold].[10] The soul always remain the same. This is clearly shown to us by its search for truth, the never-changing desire for the Good, and the firm preservation of the memory. Who, therefore, will be so senseless as to attribute the name Man most firmly established in us to the changeable body, always and everywhere shifting, rather than to the immutable soul? From this it may be seen that when Aristophanes said "men" he meant our souls, in the Platonic fashion.

7 Bracketed passage omitted in the Italian.

8 The Italian reads *complessione.*

9 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

10 Bracketed passage in the Latin only.

That the Soul was Endowed with Two Lights and why the Soul Descends into the Body[11] with Two Lights.

Chapter IV

Further, the soul, as soon as it is born from God, is attracted, by a certain natural instinct, toward its parent, God; (just as fire on the earth, born in the power of higher things, is immediately attracted by natural impulse to higher places) and, having turned toward Him, is illuminated by His rays. But this first light, when it is received in the substance of the soul, which was formerly naturally shapeless, becomes darker, and, being attracted to the suitability of the soul, becomes natural and proper to it, and therefore, through this light, as being on an equal plane with itself, the soul sees itself, and things below it, that is, all bodies. [Through this light in itself][12] it does not see God and higher things, but through this first light drawn closer to God, the soul receives again another still clearer light by which it recognizes even the heavenly.

The soul, therefore, has two lights, the one natural or innate, the other divine and supernatural. On these two together, as though on a pair of wings,[13] the soul is able to fly through the heavenly region. If it always used the divine light, it would cling to the divine and the earth would be empty of rational animals. But divine providence decreed that the soul[14] should be mistress of itself and be able to employ sometimes one light only and sometimes both at once. Hence it happens that the soul turns instinctively to its own natural light, and forgetting the divine, devotes its attention to itself and to those of its powers which have to do with the care of the body, and it desires to put these powers into effect for the making of bodies. Weighted down, as the Platonists say, with this desire, the soul descends into a body, where it exercises the functions of procreation, motion, and sensation, and with its presence there adorns the earth, the lowest level of the world. The earth, therefore, ought not to be lacking in reason, since no part of the world is without the presence of reasoning beings. Like its author, in whose likeness it was made, the whole world is compact of Reason. Our soul fell into the body when, having lost its divine light, it used its own alone and began to be content with itself. God alone, in whom nothing is lacking, above whom there is nothing, remains satisfied in Himself

11 The Italian reads *Che L'Anima Fu Creata con due Lumi, et Perche Ella Venne nel Corpo con duoi Lumi.*

12 Bracketed passage in the Italian only: *per esso.*

13 This image of the winged soul is Plato's (*Phaedrus,* 246). So also is the charioteer figure.

14 The Italian reads *l'uomo.* Ficino makes no attempt here to solve the problem left still unanswered in Plotinus, of the freedom of the will. It is clear from his other writings that, following the Neoplatonists, he believed in the freedom of the will. Cf., Inge, II, pp. 181-185. "The all-important for Ficino is to see clearly that the realization of the Good depends entirely and only upon his will" (Saitta, p. 225).

and sufficient in Himself; and therefore the soul made itself the equal of God, when it wished to be content with itself alone, as though, no less than God, it could be self-sufficient.

In How Many Ways the Soul Returns to God.

Chapter V

Clearly, Aritophanes says, this insolence was the reason that the soul, although it was born whole, was split; that is, thereafter used only one of its two lights and neglected the other. Plunged into the abyss of the body as though into the river of forgetfulness, oblivious at the moment of itself, the soul is seized by sensuality and lust as though by a tyrant and his bullies. But when the body has matured, and the instruments of sense have been purged through learning, it recovers itself a little, then its natural light shines out, and it searches out the order of natural things. By this investigation, it senses that there is some author of this great universe; it desires to see and possess Him;[15] but He can be seen only with the supernatural light. Therefore, the mind, by the searchings of its own natural light, is stirred with a vigorous desire to recover its divine light. This kind of appetite and desire is true love, and under its leadership the one-half man seeks the other half, because the natural light, which is one half of the soul, tries to kindle again in the soul[16] that once neglected divine light which we have said is its other half.

And that is what Plato means when he says in his letter to Dionysius, "The human soul tries to understand what the divine is by examining what is related to itself."[17] But, when God poured His own light into the soul, He adapted it to this end above all else, that it might lead men to the bliss which consists in enjoyment of Himself.

To that bliss we are led by four virtues: Prudence, Courage, Justice, and Temperance. Prudence first shows bliss to us.[18] The other three virtues, like three paths, lead us to bliss.

In various souls God regulates His light to this end in various ways, so that according to the direction of Prudence some men seek their creator through the offices of Courage, others through those of Justice, and others through those of Temperance. Some men, through the gift of Courage,

15 The Italian reads here *fruire.* The idea is the Neoplatonic motion which for Ficino is the chief end of human activity, the "enjoyment" of God. This enjoyment, in Plotinus a metaphysical resumption into God, is for Ficino more the "cognition" of God, in a large and spiritual sense. "Plenius est gaudium quam cognitio, non enim, quisquis cognoscit, idem simul et gaudet, quisquis autem gaudet, necessario et cognoscit" (*Epist.*, Lib. I, p. 633, cited by Saitta, p. 223).

16 The Italian reads *in nos.*

17 *Supra,* Speech II, chapter 4.

18 Cf. the Aristotelian notion of Prudence as the guiding principle of behaviour (Marshall, T., *Aristotle's Theory of Conduct,* London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1906, p. 34).

face danger and even death with brave spirits, for their religion, for their country, or for their honor.[19] Others direct their lives so justly that they themselves do no injustice to anyone and, so far as possible, allow none to be done. Others master pleasures by vigilance, abstinence, and hard work. These [three types of people] live by three different virtues, but they are all striving to attain the same end of bliss as Prudence shows it to them. These three virtues are also included in the Prudence of God Himself.

The souls of men, kindled by a desire for these three virtues, desire through their offices to attain them completely, to cleave to them and possess them forever. Courage in men because of their strength and bravery is called Masculine. Temperance is called Feminine because of a certain relaxed and cooler nature of Woman's passion[20] and her gentle disposition. Justice is called Bi-Sexual; feminine inasmuch as because of its inherent innocence it does no one any wrong, but masculine inasmuch as it allows no harm to be brought to others, [and with more severe censure frowns upon unjust men.][21] And since it is the function of the male to give and the female to receive, for that reason, the sun, which receives light from none and furnishes it to all, we call Male; the moon, which receives light from the sun and gives it to the elements, we call Bi-Sexual, since it both gives and receives; the earth, since it indeed receives from everything and gives to nothing, we call Female. Wherefore the Sun, Moon, and Earth; or Courage, Justice, and Temperance are rightly designated by the terms Male, Bi-Sexual, and Female. In order to provide worthier titles for God, in Him we call these virtues Sun, Moon, and Earth; in ourselves, we call them the Male, Bi-Sexual, and Female sex. Those who have been endowed at birth with divine light from the divine sun accompanied by a desire for Courage, we say have been granted a Masculine light; those in whom the light from the divine moon with the desire for Justice was infused, we say have been given a Bi-Sexual light, and those in whom the light from the divine earth with the desire for temperance was infused, a Feminine light. That supernatural and divine light we immediately neglect in our reversion to the natural, and considering the one of less value, we keep the other; so that we retain our one-half, but have lost the other. But certainly, when we come of age, drawn by the natural light, we do yearn for the divine, and we all proceed, everyone in his own way, to the attainment of it: through Courage those who once received from the courage of God that light with the desire for courage, others through Justice, and others in like manner through Temperance. In short, each one seeks his own other half as he first received it from God: some, through the masculine light of God, once lost but now recovered, wish to enjoy the masculine courage of God; others through the bi-sexual light similarly desire to enjoy the bi-sexual virtue, and others through the feminine in the same way. And they certainly attain a mag-

19 The Italian reads *per gentori.*
20 The Italian reads *per la mansueta natura.*
21 The bracketed passage does not appear in the Italian.

nificent reward who, when their natural spark has brightened at the proper age, think that light is not sufficient to judge the divine by, lest by a judgment of the natural light, they attribute to divine majesty the passions of souls and bodies, and lest they think that God is no higher than souls and bodies.

Certainly in this many are said to have erred, who, trusting only to their natural talents in their investigation of the divine, have said either that God does not exist, like Diagoras;[22] or, like Protagoras,[23] have doubted it; or, like the Epicureans, the Stoics, Cyrenaics,[24] and many others, have thought He was material, or, like Marcus Varro,[25] Marcus Manilius[26] and some others, have thought he was a kind of World-Soul. These men, being thus impious, have not only failed to recover the divine light once neglected, but have also debased the natural one by abusing it. What has been debased is called, and correctly so, broken and "split." Therefore the souls of those who, arrogant and swollen with pride, as it were, so boldly trust in their own strength, will be divided again as Aristophanes says, when even the natural light which was left them they obscure with false opinions, and extinguish with unjust habits.

They use the natural light rightly who, recognizing that it is weak and dim, that it is sufficient only to judge natural things, and that to judge everything which is above the level of nature, we need a higher light, prepare themselves by a thoroughgoing purgation of the soul, so that the divine light may glow again within them. By its rays they will have a true understanding of God and will be restored to their original integrity.

Love Leads Souls Back to Heaven; It Distributes the Degrees of Bliss; It Bestows Eternal Joy.

Chapter VI

Now, fellow-banqueters, make every kind of sacrifice to this God, who, Aristophanes says, is more benign to the human race than the other Gods;

22 Diagoras of Melos was a contemporary of Socrates. His atheism is satirized in the *Clouds* and *Frogs* of Aristophanes. He finally had to flee Athens under sentence of death because of his profanities of the Sacred Mysteries.
23 Protagoras of Abdera, the famous sophist and subject of Plato's dialogue by the same name, lived about 480-410 B. C. His doctrine was a species of agnosticism, based on the impossibility of attaining any absolute criterion of truth. He advocated the theory of "Man the measure of all things" in two books, one on *Truth,* and the other *On the Gods.*
24 Epicurus taught an atomistic materialism. The avowed intention of Lucretius, the chief exponent of Epicureanism, in writing his *De Rerum Natura,* was to banish human fear of the supernatural by showing that deity has no real existence for man. The Stoics professed a materialistic pantheism. The Cyrenaics were the followers of Aristippus of Cyrene, whose hedonism was the seed-bed of the materialistic schools. Some of his followers gained reputations as atheists.
25 M. Terentius Varro, 116-27 B. C., contemporary and friend of Cicero, was reputedly the most learned and voluminous of Roman writers. His many works included, among other subjects, that of philosophy.
26 M. Manilius, author of a five-book treatise on astronomy and astrology, the *Astronomicon* (Cf. A. E. Housman's learned edition in five volumes).

call upon Him with reverent prayers, and embrace Him with your whole heart. By His beneficence, He first leads souls up to the heavenly table, laden with ambrosia and nectar [that is to say, with eternal food and drink][27]; then He provides each with a seat; and then sweetly detains them forever, for none reach heaven again except those who have especially pleased the King of heaven; they please Him most who love Him most. It is completely impossible really to know Him in this life, but it is both possible and easy to love Him truly once He is somehow known. Those who know God do not please Him unless they both know Him and love Him; those who know Him and love Him are loved by God not because they know Him, but because they love Him. For we do not embrace with affection those who know us, but only those who love us, for we consider many of our acquaintances enemies. Therefore, it is not knowledge of God but love of Him which restores us to heaven.

Now the rank of those who feast at the heavenly banquet coincides with the different ranks of lovers. Those who have loved God most enjoy there the richest feast; for example, those who through deeds of courage have worshipped the Courage of God, enjoy that Courage itself; those who have worshipped Justice enjoy that; likewise those who feast on Temperance who have worshipped Temperance, and so various souls enjoy various ideas of the divine mind according to the varying attractions of their love. But they all enjoy the whole of God,[28] because He is whole in every individual idea; those especially possess the whole of God who see Him in the noblest idea, but each one possesses that virtue of God which he has most esteemed in life. Envy, therefore, as Plato says in the *Phaedrus*,[29] is absent from the chorus of the Blessed. Since to possess the thing beloved is the greatest of all pleasure, everyone, since he possesses what he loves, lives content and satisfied. Certainly, if two lovers become possessors of their own beloveds, each rests easily in the possession of his own beloved and has no fear that the other will take possession of a fairer loved one. Wherefore, it is brought about by the beneficence of Love that each is content with his own portion, without any envy, in all the different degrees of bliss.

It also happens that the blessed souls [throughout the offices of Love][30] enjoy the same feast forever without satiety, for neither food nor wine suffice to please the guests, unless hunger and thirst invite them to eat and drink; and the pleasure lasts only as long as the appetite. But who will deny that appetite is a kind of love? Therefore, eternal love, by which the soul is always drawn toward God, brings it about that the soul is always rejoicing

27 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.
28 See note 11 above. The Neoplatonists believed that in the spiritual realm the whole exists in all its parts.
29 *Phaedrus*, 247A; cf. also *Timaeus*, 29E.
30 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

in God, as though in new sights.[31] The goodness of God which always kindles this love in the soul is the same as that which makes the lover blessed.

Therefore, if I may sum up briefly, we shall praise three benefits of Love: first, by restoring to us the wholeness we lost when we were divided, He leads us back to Heaven; second, He arranges us in our places and makes us all content with that distribution; and third, banishing all repletion, Love perpetually kindles by His own peculiar ardor a new delight, as it were, in the soul, and makes the soul happy with soft and sweet enjoyment.

31 The Italian reads *cosa nuova*.

FIFTH SPEECH

Love is Most Blessed Because He is Both Beautiful and Good.

Chapter I

Carlo Marsuppini, our worthy disciple of the Muses, following the poet Landino, took up the speech of Agathon thus:

Our Agathon thinks that Love is a most blessed God because He is both most good and most beautiful. He carefully enumerates what is required for Love to be both most beautiful and most good. In the course of this enumeration, he describes Love Himself. After he has told what sort of God He is, he lists the benefits which He gives to mankind, and this is the sum of his speech.

It is our business to inquire first for what reason Agathon said, in order to prove Love blessed, that Love is beautiful as well as good, and what the difference is between goodness and beauty.

In the *Philebus*,[1] Plato would have it that the blessed is that which lacks nothing, that is to say, that which is perfect in every detail. But there is both an interior and an exterior perfection: the interior we call goodness, and the exterior, beauty; and therefore, whatever is completely good and beautiful, since it is perfect, as it were, in every part, we call most blessed.

We notice this distinction in everything. For example, in precious stones, as the natural philosophers claim, a well-balanced combination of the four elements in the interior produces the sparkle of the exterior. Likewise, an innate fecundity in the heart and roots clothes plants and trees with the most pleasing variety of fruit and foliage; and in animals, a salutary complexion of humors provides an appearance pleasing both in shape and color. Virtue of the soul likewise manifests itself in a most noble kind of beauty in words, actions, and deeds. The heavens, too, are bathed in brilliant light by their own sublime essence.

In all these cases, it is an internal perfection which produces the external. The former we call goodness, the latter beauty. For just this reason, we say that beauty is the blossom, so to speak, of goodness. By the allurements of this blossom, as though by a kind of bait,[2] the latent interior goodness attracts all who see it. But since the cognition of our minds has its origin in the senses,[3] we would never know the goodness hidden away in the inner nature of things, nor desire it, unless we were led to it by its manifestations in exterior appearance. In this fact is apparent the wonderful usefulness of this beauty and of [love, which is][4] its associate.

1 *Philebus*, 21.

2 Cf. *escam malorum* of Cicero's *De Senectute*, 44, where he quotes from Plato, "divine enim Plato 'escam malorum' appellat voluptatem quod ea videlicet homines capiantur ut pisces." Plato's idea was a common one in Renaissance literature.

3 As a theory of knowledge, this doctrine of Ficino goes beyond Aristotle's statement of the same idea, but does not equal Locke's *tabula rasa*. For a full exposition of the theory see Saitta, chapter viii.

In these examples, I think it has been sufficiently shown that there is as much difference between real goodness and its mere appearance as there is between a seed and its flower, and that as the blooms of trees grow from their seeds, and themselves produce seeds, so with this beauty which is the blossom of goodness: as it grows out of goodness, so it leads those who love it to the good. Indeed, our Hero has abundantly proved this in the preceding discussion.

How Love is Pictured, and with What Parts of the Soul Beauty is Recognized and Love is Created.

Chapter II

After this, Agathon lists in more detail the essential qualities in the beautiful appearance of this God. Love is young, he says, tender, agile, well-proportioned, and handsome. But we must first find out what these qualities contribute to beauty, and second, how they should be interpreted when they are applied to this God.

Men have faculties of both reason and sensation; reason through itself grasps the incorporeal principles of everything;[5] sensation, through the five instruments of its body, grasps the shapes and qualities of the body; colors through the eyes, sounds through the ears, odors through the nostrils, tastes through the tongue, and through the nerves the simple qualities of the elements, such as heat, cold, and the rest.

Therefore, so far as we are concerned here, there are six powers of the soul pertaining to cognition: reason, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Reason is assigned to supreme divinity, sight to fire, hearing to the air, smell to vapors, taste to water, and touch to the earth.

Reason, indeed, pursues the heavenly and does not have its seat in any part of the body, just as divinity does not have a definite seat in any part of the world. Sight is located in the highest part of the body, just as fire is located in the highest part of the world, and by its very nature perceives light, which is the peculiar property of fire. Hearing likewise, following sight in the same way in which the pure air follows fire, drinks in sounds, which rise when the air is broken and glide through the interval in the air into the ears. The sense of smell is assigned altogether to the humid air, and to vapors composed of air and water. Because it is placed between the ears and the tongue, as though between air and water, it easily catches those vapors, and prizes especially those which result from the mixture of air and water; of this sort are the pleasant smelling odors of herbs, flowers and fruits. Who

4 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

5 These *rationes incorporeae* are the *rationes aeternae* which Thomas Aquinas calls the *verbum divinum* (*Contra gent.* IV, 42) (Hasse, p. 236, note 2).

will hesitate to relate the sense of taste to the liquidity of water? This sense follows upon the sense of smell, as upon a denser air; and, imbued with the ever-flowing liquor of saliva, it takes great delight in drinking and in moist flavors. Likewise, who will hesitate to ascribe the sense of touch to the earth, since touch comes into being in all parts of the body, which is earthly, and is completed in the nerves, which are very earthly, and since it easily feels anything which has solidity and weight, which the earth gives to bodies.

Hence it also happens that touch, taste, and smell sense only what is very near them, and they are very much affected in the process of sensation, although the sense of smell does seem to detect things more remote than touch and taste.

Hearing, however, recognizes still more remote things and so it is not so limited. Sight perceives even farther than hearing and catches in a moment what the ear catches only with time, for lightning is seen long before the thunder is heard.

Reason catches the most remote things of all, for it perceives not only what is in the world and the present, as the senses do, but also what is above the heavens, in the past, and in the future.

From this it is apparent to anyone that of those six powers of the soul, three pertain to body and matter, that is, touch, taste, and smell; but the other three, that is, reason, sight, and hearing, pertain to the soul. Therefore the first three, inclining more to the body, are more closely related to it than to the soul; the things which they perceive, since they move the body (which is related to these senses), scarcely ever reach as far as the soul; and they please it least because they are the least like it. But the three higher senses, most remote from the material, are much more closely related to the soul, and they perceive those things which move the body very little, but the soul very much.

Certainly, odors, flavors, temperatures, and the like either harm or help the body a great deal, but they have little effect on the admiration or censure of the soul, and so are only moderately desired by it. On the other hand, the concept of incorporeal truth, colors, shapes and sounds, move the body either not at all or very little, and with difficulty, but they rouse the soul to avid pursuit, and attract the desire of the soul to themselves.

The food of the soul is Truth. To the discovery of it the eyes contribute greatly, and to the learning of it, the ears; therefore, what pertains to reason, sight, and hearing, the soul strives after for its own sake, like its own food. But things which move the other three senses are necessary rather to the body for nutrition, or comfort, or generation, than to the soul, and so the soul desires these things, not for itself, but for another, that is, its body, and we are said to love only those things which we desire for ourselves, and not to love those which we desire for the sake of something else.

Therefore we say correctly that love pertains only to knowledge, shapes, and sounds, and hence that that is beauty only which is found in these three:

virtue of the soul, shape, and sound; because that beauty greatly arouses the soul, is called κάλλος, 'arousing,' from the Greek word καλέω, which means *to call:* κάλλος in Greek is equivalent to *pulchritudo* in Latin.[6]

For we derive pleasure from the noble disposition of the soul, the comely appearance of a beautiful body, and the harmony of sounds, and since the soul considers these three (inasmuch as they are related to it and in a measure incorporeal) of more value than the other three, it is fitting that it should accept them more readily, embrace them more ardently, and admire them more eagerly. This pleasing quality, whether of virtue, shape, or sound, which summons and attracts the soul to itself through reason, sight, or hearing, is most rightly called Beauty. These are the three graces about which Orpheus speaks thus: "Splendor, Youth, and Abundant Happiness."[7]

He calls "splendor" that charm and beauty of the soul which consists of brightness of truth and virtue; "youth" he applies to charm of shape and color, for this shines especially in the greenness of youth; and finally, by "happiness," he means that pure, salutary, and perpetual delight which we feel in music.

Beauty is Something Incorporeal.

Chapter III

Since this is the case, then, beauty must necessarily be something which is common to virtue, appearance, and sound, for we would certainly not call any of those three beautiful in the same sense unless one definition of beauty were inherent in all three.

Hence it happens that the principle itself of beauty cannot be body, since, if beauty were corporeal, it would have nothing in common with the virtues of the soul, which are incorporeal; in fact, beauty is so far from being body that not only is such beauty as that in the virtues of the soul unable to be corporeal, but also that which is in bodies and sounds. For although we say that certain bodies are beautiful, nevertheless, they are not beautiful because of their matter itself, since one and the same body of a man may be whole and handsome today and tomorrow be deformed by some disfiguring misfortune, as though it were one thing to be a body, and quite another to be handsome. Nor are things beautiful from mere quantity, since both large and small things may seem beautiful. Often the large are ugly and the small attractive, and vice versa: the small ugly, and the great most handsome. It also happens sometimes that a similar beauty is in both great and small

6 The editor of D thought κάλλος was inadequate and substituted πρόκλησις for the first κάλλος. This perverts the meaning unnecessarily, as is shown by the Italian, which reads *et voci perche molto provoca lo animo, si chiama calos cio e provocazione, da un verbo che dice caelo, che vuol dire pro voco, et calo in Greco signifie,* etc.

7 Orpheus, *Hymn LX*, 3, Ἀγλαΐη θαλίη τε καὶ Εὐφροσύνη πολύολβε. The Italian reads *Splendore, Viridita et Laetizia abbondante.*

bodies. Now, if, in a quantity remaining uniformly the same, the beauty may be changed by some accident, and if the beauty may remain in some changed quantity, and may seem identical in great and small alike, then certainly these two, beauty and quantity, must be completely separate.

But if the beauty of every body consisted in thickness itself of the body, being in a certain sense corporeal, it would nevertheless still not please the onlooker insofar as it was corporeal. The beauty of some person pleases the soul not insofar as it exists in exterior matter, but insofar as its image is comprehended or grasped by the soul through sight. That image in the sight and in the soul, since these two are incorporeal, cannot itself be material, for how could the small pupil of the eye take in the whole heaven, for example, if the eye received the heavens in a corporeal way? Not at all, certainly. But the soul, in a single point, takes in the whole breadth of the body in a spiritual way and in an incorporeal image, and that beauty only pleases the soul which is taken in by it. Moreover, though the image may be a likeness of an external body, it is itself incorporeal in the soul.

Therefore, it is an incorporeal quality which pleases. What pleases is attractive to anyone, and what is attractive, is, in short, beautiful. And so it is brought about that love has reference to something incorporeal, and beauty itself is rather a spiritual image of a thing than its corporeal form.

But there are some who think that beauty consists in a disposition of parts,[8] or, [to use their own language,][9] size and proportion together with a certain agreeableness of colors. We do not agree with their opinion because, since this kind of disposition of parts would exist in composite things only, there could be no such thing as a beautiful simplicity. But we call "beautiful" the pure colors, the sun and moon, one sound, the glow of gold, the gleam of silver, wisdom, and the soul, all of which are simple, and they certainly please us like beautiful things. Added to this is the fact that the whole proportion includes the composite parts of the body and does not lie in them individually, but in them as a whole, and so the single parts will not be beautiful in themselves. But from the individual particulars, the proportion of the composite whole arises, whence follows something absurd: that things which are not beautiful in their own natures produce beauty. But it also happens time and again that though the proportion and size of its parts remains the same, the body does not please as it did before. Certainly the shape of your body is the same today as it was last year, but the beauty is not the same; nothing grows old more slowly than shape and more quickly than beauty. From this it is clearly established that beauty and shape are not the same.

Then, too, we often see a more orderly disposition and size of parts in one person than in another, and yet the other person, we know not why,

8 Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics,* VII, 8: "*τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν,*" and *Metaphysics,* XIII, 4: "*τοῦ δε καλοῦ μέγιστα εἴδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὡρισμένον.*"

9 In the Latin only. The Italian reads simply *veramente,* 'really.'

is nevertheless adjudged more beautiful, and loved more ardently. This fact seems to warn us sufficiently to consider beauty as something other than the disposition of parts.

Likewise, the same principle advises us not to think that beauty consists in agreeableness of color,[10] for very often the color is more attractive in an old person, and the beauty greater in the young. It sometimes happens among those of equal age that one who surpasses another in color is yet surpassed by the other in charm and beauty.

Nor would anyone dare affirm that beauty is a kind of mixture of shape and colors, for, according to that standard, neither knowledge and sounds, which lack both shape and color, nor colors and lights, which have no definite shape, could be judged worthy of love.

Now, the desire of anyone is satisfied by the possession of that which he wants. For example, hunger and thirst are satisfied by food and drink. Love is satisfied by no sight or embrace of a body; therefore, it desires nothing bodily, but seeks beauty; whence it happens that beauty cannot be anything corporeal.

From these arguments it is concluded that if those who, aroused by love, thirst after beauty, wish to quench their burning thirst with a draught of this liquor, they must seek elsewhere than in the river of matter, or in the streams of quantity, shape, or colors for the sweet potion of this beauty [to quench their thirst by which their thirst is[11] aroused.] Whither, then, will you poor lovers turn? Who was it who kindled[12] the white-hot flames of your hearts? Who will quench so great a fire? That is the need, this the labor;[13] I shall answer you soon, but listen.

Beauty is the Splendor of the Divine Countenance.

Chapter IV

As soon as the Angelic Mind and the World-Soul were born from Him, the Divine Power over everything beneficently infused into them as His offspring that light in which lay the power of creating everything. In these two, because they were nearest, he depicted the pattern of the whole world much more exactly than it is in the material world. Whence this picture of the world which we see shines whole and more clearly in the Angelic Mind and in the World-Soul. For in these two are the Forms of each planet, the sun, the moon, the rest of the stars, the elements, stones, plants, and each of the animals. Representations of this sort the Platonists call Prototypes, or Ideas in the Angelic Mind, Concepts or mental images in the World-Soul, and Forms or physical images in the material world. They are bright

10 Cf. Shorey (*What Plato Said,* p. 222) on *Hippias Major* 290B: "An artist does not paint the eyes of his statue purple because that is the most beautiful color."

11 The Italian reads *per i speguere la sete loro.*

12 The Italian reads *Qui fû quella che accese l'ardentissimo fiûme. . . .*

13 Vergil, *Aeneid,* VI, 129, "'Hoc opus, hic labor est.'"

in the material world, brighter in the soul, and brightest in the Angelic Mind. Therefore the single face of God shines successively in these three mirrors, placed according to their rank: the Angelic Mind, the World-Soul, and the Body of the World. In the first, because it is the nearest to God, the light is most bright; in the second, more remote, it is somewhat darker, and in the last, the farthest away, compared with the others, it is very dark.

Hence the holy Angelic Mind, because it is unimpeded by any attendance upon the body, reflects upon itself where it sees the face of God engraved within its own breast, and seeing there, is struck with awe, and clings most avidly to it forever. The charm of that divine countenance we call beauty; the passion of the Angelic Mind seeking inwardly the face of God, we call love. O, that it might touch us also: but our soul, born into a condition in which it is encased by an earthly body, is inclined to the function of generation. Weighed down by this preoccupation, it neglects the treasure-house concealed within itself, and so, involved in an earthly body, it is servant to the needs of the body for a very long time. To this labor it accommodates sense indeed continuously, and reason also more often than it should. Hence it happens that though it does not notice the glow of that divine countenance shining forever within it until the body has at length become mature and the soul purged, it may with reflection contemplate the countenance of God revealed to our eyes in the handiwork of God. Through just this kind of contemplation we advance to beholding Him who shines forth from within His handiwork.[14] In this kind of reflection, then, it is finally raised to the recognition of God who shines within itself. But since the countenance of the parent is pleasing to the children, it necessarily follows that the countenance of God the Father is most pleasing to souls. The glory and glow of His countenance, to indulge in tiresome repetition, whether in the Angelic Mind, in the Soul, or in the material world, is to be called universal Beauty, and the desire for it is to be called universal Love.[15]

We do not doubt that this beauty is everywhere incorporeal, for it is obviously incorporeal in the Angelic Mind and in the Soul. That it is also incorporeal in bodies we have both shown above and now most clearly understand from this: that the eye sees nothing but the light of the sun, for the shapes and colors of bodies are never seen unless illuminated with light, nor do they come to the eyes with their own matter itself. Yet it seems necessary for them to be in the eyes in order to be seen by them. Therefore, one light of the sun, painted with the colors and shapes of everything illuminated by it, presents itself to the eyes. The eyes, with the help of a certain light of their own, perceive the light thus affected; they see both the perceived

14 The Italian reads *nella machina del Mondo.*

15 Cf. passage quoted from Dionysius the Areopagite, *supra,* Third Speech, ch. I.

light itself, and everything which is in it.[16] Wherefore, this whole order of the visible world is presented [to view], not in the way in which it is infused in the matter of bodies, but in the way in which it is infused in the light streaming into the eyes. In this light, since it is separate from matter, that order is completely independent of body.

This is also evident from the fact that the light itself cannot be body, since it completely fills the whole world in a moment, from its rising to its setting. It penetrates the body of water and air everywhere, without opposition, and though spread over filthy things, it is nowhere soiled.

But these qualities do not in any way correspond with the nature of bodies, since body does not move in a moment, but in time, nor do two things penetrate each other without opposition from one, the other, or both, but two bodies mixed together stain each other with mutual contagion. We see this in the mixture of water and wine, and of fire and earth. Since, therefore, the light of the sun is incorporeal, whatever it assumes, it does so in the manner of its own nature; therefore, it assumes the colors and shapes of bodies in an incorporeal way, and in the same way it is itself seen, when taken in by the eyes. Hence it happens that this whole earthly beauty, which is the third face of God, presents itself incorporeally to the eyes, through the incorporeal light of the sun.

How Hate and Love are Born, or that Beauty is Incorporeal.

Chapter V

From all these arguments it follows that the entire charm of the divine countenance, which is called universal beauty, is incorporeal, not only in the Angelic Mind and in the World-Soul, but also in the sight of the eyes. Nor do we love only this whole beauty all at once; but moved by our admiration, we love also its parts. There is born a particular love for a particular beauty, and so we are attracted to some man, a part of the world order, especially when in him a spark of the divine beauty clearly shines.[17] Love of this kind springs from two causes: first, the image of the Father's countenance pleases us, and second, the appearance and shape of a well-proportioned man agrees most clearly with that concept of mankind which our soul catches and retains from the author of everything.[18] Whence, if an image of the outer man, received through the senses and going across

16 Cf. the Platonic theory of *συναύγεια,* that sight is accomplished somewhere out in space, where the light of the eye meets the light reflected from the object, and carrying the image of that object (Hasse, p. 237, note 8).

17 Cf. the concept of the "spark of reason" in everyone, in the Stoic philosophy.

18 Ficino's theory of beauty here is the ultimate development of what is suggested in Aristotle: the dependence of beauty upon correspondence with the Idea. It is in this aspect of his aesthetic theory that Ficino is important. He is not merely reiterating earlier theories, but giving them a new and deeper significance.

into the soul, disagrees with the Idea of man which the soul possesses, he immediately displeases us, and is disliked as being ugly. If the image agrees, he thereby pleases us and is loved, as being beautiful. Whence it happens that some men, meeting us, immediately please or displease us, and we do not know the cause of such feeling; and naturally so, since the soul, impeded by its attendance upon the body, by no means reflects upon those Ideas which are innate in it; but, by some natural, mysterious congruity or incongruity, it happens that the exterior form of a thing, striking with its own image the Idea of the same thing painted within the soul, agrees or disagrees with it, and, moved by this mysterious agreement or disagreement, the soul either hates or loves the thing itself.

Clearly that divine ray [which we mentioned above][19] implants in the Angelic Mind and the World-Soul the true pattern of man to be created, but in the matter of the World, since matter is far removed from that divine artificer, the nature of man degenerates from that true Idea of man. But he becomes more like it according as the matter is better disposed, and more unlike in other matter.

As the closer imitation agrees with the Force in God, and the Idea in the Angelic Mind, so it corresponds and agrees with the Concept in the Soul. The soul approves this agreement; indeed, in this very agreement consists beauty, and in this approval consists the passion of love. But since Idea and Concept are foreign to material body, the nature of a man is judged "like," not on the basis of its matter or quantity, but rather on the basis of something incorporeal. As it is like, it agrees with those;[20] as it agrees, it is beautiful; for that reason, body and beauty are different.

If anyone asks how the form of the body can be like the concept of the soul and the Idea of the mind, let him consider, I pray, the building of an architect. In the beginning, an architect conceives an idea of the building, like an Idea in the soul. Then he builds, as nearly as possible, the kind of house he has thought out. Who will deny that the house is a body, and that it is very much like the incorporeal idea of the builder in likeness to which it was made? Furthermore, it is to be judged like the idea[21] more because of a certain incorporeal plan than because of its matter. Therefore, subtract its matter, if you can. You can indeed subtract it in thought, but leave the plan; nothing material or corporeal will remain to you. On the contrary, these two will be exactly the same internally, both the plan which comes forth from the builder [into the physical house], and the plan which remains [unmaterialized] in [the mind of] the builder. You may do the same with any human body. You will find that its form, agreeing with the concept in the soul, is simple, and is completely independent of matter.

19 Bracketed clause in the Italian only.
20 The Ideas, Forms, etc.
21 The Italian reads simply *simile si debe giudicare.*

How Many Things are Required of a Thing to be Beautiful and that Beauty is a Spiritual Gift.

Chapter VI

What, then, is the beauty of the body? Activity, vivacity, and a certain grace shining in the body because of the infusion of its own idea. This kind of glow does not descend into matter until the matter has been carefully prepared. The preparation of the living body consists in these three things: Arrangement, Proportion, and Adornment.[22] Arrangement means the intervals of its parts, Proportion means their quantity, and Adornment means its shape and color.

In the first place, it is fitting that all the parts of the body should have a natural place: that the ears be in their proper place, the eyes in theirs, the nostrils in theirs, etc., and that the eyes should be at equal distances on either side of the nose, and likewise that both ears be equally distant from the eyes.

Nor is this balance pertaining to the plan of the intervals enough unless there is added a Proportion of parts, to give to each part, keeping the proper proportions of the whole body, its mean size, so that three noses placed end to end will equal the length of one face, and the semi-circles of both ears joined together will equal the circle of the open mouth; the joining of the eyebrows will also give the same result; the length of the nose will match the length of the lips, and so also will that of the ears; the two circles of the eyes will equal one opening of the mouth; eight heads will compass the height of the body: the same distance will also be measured by the spread of the arms, to the side, and likewise of the legs and feet.[23]

Besides these, we consider Adornment necessary, so that the skillful drawing of lines, wrinkles, and the sparkle of the eyes may decorate that Arrangement and Proportion of the parts.

22 The germ of this triple theory is in Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* XIII, 4 (*supra,* note 8), but the use of the three terms, *Ordo, Modus,* and *Species,* and particularly of the last, is indicative of a rhetorical source. The editor is indebted to Dr. Ulrich Middeldorf of the University of Chicago for the suggestion that the actual source of Ficino's idea is St. Bonaventura's rhetoric, *De Reductio Artium ad Theologiam,* in which the three terms mentioned are used to describe the method of oral description, and hence to describe the things themselves (cf. *Speculum,* XVII, 1, p. 24, where Mr. Richard McKeon, in his article on "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages" quotes Bonaventura's use of the three terms). Ficino was well acquainted with Bonaventura's writings and was particularly interested in rhetoric (Della Torre, pp. 701-2), and it is possible that the work mentioned may have been the source of Ficino's use of the three terms. Of the three, only the last is difficult to translate. It has been translated *adornment* because, in its rhetorical use, the word meant the refinement or polish applied to a speech when its substance and organization have been determined.

23 The source of this particular theory of proportions is thus far undetermined. It is basically Lysippian rather than Polyclitian (because the Lysippian canon called for a body eight heads tall, rather than seven), but there were so many canons in the various Renaissance schools of art that it is practically impossible to determine from which one Ficino borrowed this particular theory. Cf. Alberti's canon for sculptors.

Now, though these three may be in matter, they cannot themselves be any part of the body. The arrangement of the parts is certainly not one of the parts, for the arrangement is found in all the parts, but no one part is found in all of them. There is added the fact that arrangement is nothing else than the appropriate spacing of parts. But what shall we say spacing is but the distance between the parts? Distance, finally, is either nothing, perfectly empty space, or the mere drawing lines, but who will say that lines, which lack breadth and depth, the qualities necessary to body, are bodies?

In the same way, Proportion is not quantity, but the limit of quantity; these limits are surfaces, lines, and points, which, since they lack mass and depth, are not considered bodies. Adornment also, we place in a pleasing harmony of lights and shades and lines, not in matter. From all this it is clear that beauty is so foreign to matter that it never imparts itself to matter unless the matter has been treated with the three incorporeal preparations which we have discussed.

But the basis of these is a temperate combination of the four elements, such that the body is most like heaven, whose substance is temperate, and does not interfere by any excess of humors, with the soul's work of incarnation. For thus the heavenly glow will easily light up in a body much like heaven, and that perfect Form of man which the soul possesses will turn out more accurately in the quiet and compliant matter.

Moreover, in exactly the same way, sounds are prepared to receive their beauty. The Arrangement of sounds[24] is from the low to the octave, and thence descending again. Their Proportion is a progression restricted to thirds, fourths, fifths and sixths, tones and half-tones; their Adornment is the rich quality of a good tone.

By these three elements, as it were, then, the bodies constructed out of many parts, such as plants, animals, combinations of several sounds, etc., are prepared to receive beauty. But simpler bodies, like the four elements, stones, metals, and single voices are sufficiently well-adapted for the same purpose by a certain inner balance, a richness and clarity of their own natures. Moreover, the soul is the most effectively accommodated to this purpose by its own nature for this reason: that it is both spirit and a mirror, so to speak, next to God, in which, as we have said above, the image of the divine countenance is reflected. Therefore, just as nothing need be added to gold to make it appear beautiful, but if any earthly stains touch it, they must be removed, so the soul needs nothing added to it in order to be beautiful, but anxious care and solicitude for the body must be removed from it, and the disturbance of desire and fear must be dispelled from it; then immediately the natural beauty of the soul will shine out. But lest our speech digress further, let us conclude briefly from what we have said

24 Ficino's application of his triple standard to music is apparently his own. The three terms *ordo, modus,* and *species* in Renaissance music had technical meanings which Ficino has not followed here. *Modus,* for example, had the meaning of modern "mode."

above, that beauty is a certain vital and spiritual charm first infused in the Angelic Mind by the illuminating light of God, thence in the souls of men, the shapes of bodies, and sounds; through reason, sight, and hearing, it moves our souls and delights them; in delighting them, it carries them away, and in so doing, inflames them with burning love.

On Representing Love.

Chapter VII

The poet Agathon, in the custom of the ancient poets, clothes the God in human form and describes Him in the image of a handsome man, "young, tender, flexible or rather agile, well-proportioned, and handsome." Why these? These are really more the preparations for a beautiful nature than Beauty itself. For, of these five qualities, the first three stand for a well-ordered complexion of the body, which is the primary basis [of beauty], and the other two show Arrangement,[25] Proportion, and Adornment.

Natural philosophers have shown that soft and firm smoothness of young flesh is the measure of a sound constitution.[26] When heat exceeds too much, the body[27] is rough and dry; when cold, it is stiff; when dryness, it is hard and coarse; when moisture, it is loose and flabby, wrinkled, and drawn. Therefore a soft and firm smoothness of the body shows its moderate participation in the four humors. For this reason, Agathon called Love "soft, delicate, and tender."

Why did he call Him "young"? Because this balanced composition is possessed, not only by reason of nature, but also by reason of age, for after a long period of time, the finer parts of the humors are dissolved, and the extremely thick parts remain; when the [elements of] fire and air are exhausted, an excess of water and earth holds sway.

But why did he call Him "agile and flexible"? So that you might understand that Love was capable and quick in all actions, lest by chance you should think that when he said "soft," he meant the softness of water or of women, a languid and sinewless softness. This indeed is just the opposite of a sound constitution.

After these he added, "well-proportioned," that is, well-formed in the arrangement and proportion of His parts. He added also, "handsome," that is, glowing with a pleasing adornment of colors.

Since these preparations had been explained before, Agathon did not enumerate the rest, for we are to understand that close upon these preparations follows the arrival of Beauty. These five parts are, as we said, in the image of man, and it seems that in the power of love they must be differently

25 'Arrangement' is omitted, incorrectly, in the Italian only.

26 This explanation of Agathon's panegyric in terms of the theory of humors lays the groundwork for Socrates' criticism of Agathon's arguments (Speech VI).

27 *Corpus* here probably means the skin, the surface of the body, rather than the body itself.

interpreted, for they apply to His effects as well as to His own nature. He is said to be "young" because youths are affected very much by Love, and those caught in his toils seek loves of a young age; "gentle" because gentle natures are more easily caught, and those who are caught, though they may have been fierce before, always become gentle; "agile and flexible" because he covertly works his way in and in the same way steals out; "well-proportioned" because he seeks the shapely and regular and shuns their opposites; "handsome" because it is at the blooming and flourishing age that He inspires the soul of man, and Love always desires the blooming. Since Agathon explains these most copiously, let it suffice to have touched upon them briefly.

On the Virtue of Love.

Chapter VIII

What Agathon said about the four virtues in explanation of the goodness of Love is to be interpreted so that He is thereby shown to be "just"; because, where love is pure and true, there is an interchange of good will which admits of no insult or injustice. So great is the power of this good will that it alone is able to preserve mankind in undisturbed peace, which neither prudence, nor courage, nor force of arms, of laws, or of eloquence, without good will, can bring about. Moreover, he calls Love temperate, because He masters base desires. For, since Love seeks beauty, which consists in a certain order and temperance, He spurns base and immoderate desires; He always repudiates immoral actions (about this you have already heard enough from our Hero, in the very beginning). Where Love's desire rules, all other desires are spurned. Agathon adds, "very strong," for what is stronger than boldness, and who fights more boldly than the lover for a loved one?

"Before the other gods," means before the other planets. Mars[28] is outstanding in strength among the planets, because he makes men stronger, but Venus masters him. For the man at whose birth Mars is in his angle in the heavens, either in the second or the eighth mansion,[29] he portends

28 Ficino's attitude toward astrology is explained at some length in Lynn Thorndike's *History of Magic and Experimental Science,* Vol. IV, chapter lxiii. According to Saitta, "he indulged in the astronomical practices of his time, and had his own horoscope and those of some of his friends, although he believed in divine providence and free will. His sympathy with astrology, revealed especially in the *De Vita,* was the cause of much criticism from critics of necromancy in the court of Innocent VIII" (p. 12). His astrological learning is revealed throughout the *Commentary,* where it is the basis of much of his interpretation.

29 For a brief discussion of the theory of the zodiac and its signs, see Johnson, pp. 22-3. For explanation of the astrological terms used here, the student of English literature will find useful Curry, pp. 172-5, where diagrams make clear the theories discussed. A "mansion" is one-twelfth of the zodiac, or a "sign." Each planet, except the moon, has two mansions. Each mansion, in turn, is divided into three sections of ten degrees each, called "faces," or "aspects." In each quarter of the zodiac the three houses are named, "Angle," "Succedant," and "Cadent," and the poles are described as "In oriente," "In occidente," "In medio coeli," and "In imo coeli."

misfortune. Venus, when in conjunction with Mars, in opposition to him, or in reception, or watching from sextile or trine aspect, as we say, often checks his malignance. Again, when Mars is dominant at the birth of a man, Mars bestows upon him greatness of soul, and a temper; if Venus comes next, she does not check that virtue of a great soul given him by Mars, but she does suppress the vice of temper. Hence she seems to master and appease Mars, "but Mars never masters Venus." If, indeed, she comes first, she bestows the passion of love. If Mars comes next, he renders Venus' passion hotter by his heat. So, anyone at whose birth Mars has been in a mansion of Venus, either in Libra or in Taurus, because of the presence of Mars, will love most violently.

"Again, Mars follows Venus, Venus does not follow Mars," since boldness is the foot-follower of love, not love of boldness. For it is not from the fact that they are bold that men are caught by love, but usually from the fact that they are wounded by love, they become most bold to undergo any dangers for the sake of their beloveds. Lastly, the most obvious proof of Love's strength, which surpasses everything, is that everything obeys Love, but He Himself, no one. Certainly the heavenly beings, the animals, and all bodies love; likewise both the brave and the wise. Rich men and exalted kings bow their necks to the rule of Love, but Love is subject to none of these. For the bribes of the rich cannot buy love, nor can the threats or violence of the mighty force us to love or cease loving, for love is free and rises of its own accord in free will, which not even God, who decreed that it should be free in the very beginning, controls.

Hence it happens that Love, which rules over all, escapes the power of all. So great is His freedom that, although the rest of the desires, powers, and functions of the soul usually seek other ends, different from themselves, love is content to be its own reward, as if there were no other end except love which was worthy of it. For he who loves, loves love primarily, for he wishes most of all from his loved one that he requite his love.

"Love is moreover most wise." In what respect Love is the creator and preserver of everything and the teacher and master of each of the arts has been sufficiently discussed, I think, in the speech of Eryximachus.[30] In this the wisdom of Love is shown.

From all this it is concluded that Love is most blessed because He is most beautiful and most good. To be most beautiful consists in this: that he delights in most beautiful things as being like Himself; and most good in this: that He makes lovers most good, and He must be most good who makes others most good.

30 *Supra,* Speech III, chapter 3.

On the Gifts of Love.

Chapter IX

What Love is has appeared in our previous discourse. What the nature of Love is we have just learned from these words of Agathon. What gifts He bestows we may easily learn from what has been said. There is one love which is simple, and another which is mutual. Whomever the simple love includes, it renders judicious in foresight, sharp in discrimination, eloquent in discussion, great-souled in tasks, witty for jokes, quick for jests, and strong for serious things.

Mutual love offers security by overcoming danger, peace by driving off dissension, and happiness by avoiding misery, for where there is mutual regard, there are no plots; everything is in common; there controversy, deceit, homicide, and strife cease. That that mutual love bestows tranquillity of this sort not only upon animals, but upon the heavens and elements as well, is touched upon by Agathon here and is proved at greater length in the speech of Eryximachus, above. In Agathon's speech Love is clearly said to soothe with his song[31] the minds of men and gods. This will be perfectly comprehensible to him who remembers that it was shown in the previous discussion that love is in everything and extends to everything.

Love is both Older and Younger than the Rest of the Gods.

Chapter X

Before I finish, gentlemen, I shall try to answer as best I can three questions which come up in Agathon's discussion: first, it is asked why Phaedrus said that Love was older than Saturn and Jupiter, but Agathon said that Love was younger; second, what the rule of Necessity means in Plato, and what the rule of Love means; and third, what gods acquired what arts under the influence of Love.

Because of a certain love for the propagation of His own seed, and by the beneficance of His providence, God, the father of everything, created the Angelic Mind as his servant, which moves Saturn, Jupiter, and the rest of the planets. This mind, as soon as it is born, recognizing its parent, loves Him. We say that that love by which the mind is created is older than it, but that that with which it loves its creator is younger; however, the Angelic Mind did not receive from its father the ideas of the planet Saturn and the others until it was attracted toward His countenance by innate love. After it had received them, it loved the gift of its parent more strongly. Thus, therefore, the love of that Angelic Mind for God is partly older than the ideas, which are called gods, and partly younger. Therefore, Love is the beginning and the end, the first and last of the gods.

31 The Italian reads *co'l caldo suo,* "with his warmth." All Latin texts read *cantu.*

Love Reigns before Necessity.

Chapter XI

But in order for the second question to be answered, Love must here be shown to reign before Necessity, since divine Love gave to everything born from It an origin, in which there is no power of necessity[32] involved. For, since Love has nothing above It, It is unimpelled, but brings everything into being of Its own free will. But the Angelic Mind, which follows God, necessarily grows out of His sowing. He therefore produces by means of Love, but this Mind is produced by necessity. In the first case, the domination of Love comes first, and in the second, that of Necessity. Although the Mind was born from the supreme goodness of God and is therefore good, nevertheless, that which advances beyond God necessarily degenerates from the infinite perfection of its parent, for the effect never achieves the whole goodness of its cause. At any rate, in this necessary progression and also degeneration of the effect, the power of Necessity consists. But the Mind, as we have said, as soon as it is born, loves its author, and there the reign of Love rises up again, for the Mind is directed toward God by love, and with love God illuminates a thing turned toward Him.

But here again the force of Necessity creeps up, since, to be sure, that light descending from God is not received by a Mind naturally dark, with as great brightness as it was given by God. For a thing is thought to receive the light according to the capacity of its own nature. Therefore because of the interference of the nature of the thing receiving it, the light becomes obscure.

To this Necessity the priority of Love succeeds again, because that Mind, lighted by this first glow of God, is drawn back more ardently to Him, and, aroused by this glow as though by a spark of light, it seeks the whole fullness of the light. Hence God, by the beneficence of his providence, also spreads his divine light beyond that first natural light, and so the power of Love and Necessity alternately succeed each other.

This succession, in the divine, is understood in terms of the natural order, and this order is understood in terms of intervals of time. The whole is to be interpreted in such a way, however, that love is first and latest of all. What we have said of the Angelic Mind, with reference to these two powers, must be understood as applying to the soul also, and the other worlds made by God. For that reason, if it is spoken of absolutely, the rule of Love is older than that of Necessity, since the power of Love begins in God, and the power of Necessity begins in created things. But if we speak of it with reference to the things created by God, the reign of the tyrant Necessity preceded that of Love, since things themselves are produced by

32 For Ficino, like the Neoplatonists, volition and necessity are the same in God. This theory of a Christian moral necessity contrasts with the Greek ἀνάγκη, which he refers to here in the term "necessity." The Neoplatonic creation was by love, which is justification and motive enough in itself.

necessity and in proceeding degenerate, before they are turned toward their father by love.

Orpheus sings of these two reigns in two hymns: of the rule of Necessity in his *Hymn to Night* thus: "Mighty Necessity rules over everything,"[33] and of the rule of Love in his *Hymn to Venus,* thus: "Thou rulest the three Fates, and createst everything [that is in the heavens, on the earth, and in the sea.]"[34] Orpheus posited two divine reigns and compared them with each other, placing Love before Necessity, when he said that Love rules the Three Fates, in whom Necessity resides.

How, in the Reign of Necessity, Saturn Castrated Uranus and Jupiter Bound Saturn.

Chapter XII

We can easily understand from what has been said, in what sense Agathon says here that the subordinate gods, during the reign of Necessity either castrate or bind their parents. For this is not to be interpreted as meaning that the Angelic Mind divides and tears apart God Himself, but only the gift infused in it by God. We proved clearly enough a little while ago that the gifts of God in the receiving spirit necessarily fall below the highest perfection of God. Hence it happens that that richness of nature, certainly whole in God, but in the Angelic Mind diminished, and in a sense maimed, is rightly said to have been castrated. This is said to happen in the rule of Necessity, because it necessarily happens, at the wish neither of the giver nor of the receiver, but by that necessity by which the effect[35] cannot equal its cause. For thus Saturn, that is, the Angelic Mind, seems to castrate Uranus, that is, the supreme God. Jupiter also, that is the World-Soul, seems to bind Saturn, that is, to confine within narrower limits, because of the very defection of its own nature, the force received from the Angelic Mind; for the power of the latter[36] is greater than that of the former, and therefore, the power which, in the Angelic Mind, because of its breadth is unimpeded and unbound, in the World-Soul, because of its narrowness, is considered bound and restricted. I omit what the astrologers think, that the malice of the planet Saturn is usually checked by conjunction, exception, or opposition with Jupiter, or in his sextile or trine aspect; but enough on this. Let us go on to the third question.

33 Orpheus, *Hymn to Night,* III, 11, "δεινὴ γὰρ ἀνάγκη πάντα κρατύνει."

34 Orpheus, *Hymn to Venus,* LV, 5 ff.:

> καὶ κρατέεις τρισσῶν μοιρῶν, γενῦᾶς δὲ τὰ πάντα,
> ὅσσα τ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐστι καὶ ἐν γαίῃ πολυκάρπῳ
> ἐν πόντου τε βυθῷ . . .

The bracketed portion of the quotation is omitted in the Italian.

35 The Latin text reads *affectus;* it should be *effectus* to convey the meaning If *affectus* is correct, it is not used in its familiar meaning of *passion* or desire.

36 The use of *huius* and *illius* in the Latin here must be interpreted as meaning their temporal sequence, not the ordinary meaning of the "former and latter."

Which Gods Bestow which Arts upon Men.

Chapter XIII

Agathon thinks that the arts were given to humanity by the Gods because of love: the art of ruling by Jupiter;[37] of archery, prophecy, and medicine by Apollo; bronze-work by Vulcan; the art of weaving by Minerva; and music by the Muses. Twelve gods are in charge of the twelve signs of the Zodiac: Pallas of Aries, Venus of Taurus, Apollo of Gemini, Mercury of Cancer, Jupiter of Leo, Ceres of Virgo, Vulcan of Libra, Mars of Scorpio, Diana of Sagittarius, Vesta of Capricornus, Juno of Aquarius, and Neptune of Pisces.

By these all the arts are handed down to mankind. The signs confer the powers for each of the arts upon the body, and the Gods who are in charge of them bestow them upon the soul: so Jupiter, through Leo, makes a man most fit for the governing of Men and Gods, that is, fit to manage well both divine affairs and human; Apollo, through Gemini, teaches prophecy, medicine, and archery; Pallas, through Aries, teaches the skill of weaving; Vulcan, through Libra, teaches bronze-working; and the others the rest of the arts. But because the gifts of Providence are showered upon us by His beneficence, we say they are given at the instigation of Love.

Moreover, we think that musical harmony is born in that swift and orderly revolution of the heavens:[38] eight tones from the eight orbits, but out of them all a certain ninth harmony is produced. And so we name the nine sounds of the heavens, from their musical harmony, the Muses.[39] Our soul was from the beginning endowed with the principle of this music, for the heavenly harmony is rightly said to be innate in anything whose origin is heavenly. This harmony is then imitated by various instruments and songs. This gift like the rest was given us through the love of the divine providence. Therefore, my noble friends, let us love this God because He is most beautiful; because He is most good, let us imitate Him; because He is most blessed, let us revere Him, so that by His bounty and mercy to us, He will grant us possession of His own Beauty, Goodness, and Bliss.

37 This is an interpretation of the picture in the *Timaeus.* In fact, the *Timaeus,* the source of the Neoplatonic theory of the inter-relation of all the parts of the world, is the ultimate reason for the acceptance of astrology in the Neoplatonic system. The idea of close relations between the stars and humanity fitted their theory beautifully, and so was willingly espoused with the limitation, of course, that the free will and divine providence had to be maintained.

38 The familiar theory of the music of the spheres, from Pythagoras.

39 The etymology here is, of course, the reverse of the true one. Music is derived from the Muses, not vice versa.

SIXTH SPEECH

Introduction to the Discussion of Love.

Chapter I

Up to this point Carlo Marsuppini had been the speaker, but then Tommaso Benci, a careful student of Socrates, with willing spirit and smiling countenance took upon himself the commentary on Socrates' speech.

Our Socrates, he said, judged by the oracle of Apollo the wisest of all the Greeks,[1] used to lay claim to the art of love before all the rest, as though Socrates or anyone else should be judged most wise on the basis of his knowledge of this art. Socrates said he had received his knowledge of this art, not from the natural philosophers Anaxagoras,[2] Damon,[3] or Archelaus,[4] nor from the rhetoricians, Prodicus of Chios[5] or Aspasia,[6] nor from the musician Connus,[7] from all of whom he had learned a great deal, but from Diotima,[8] a prophetess who was inspired with a divine spirit. In my opinion he said this in order to show that only by the inspiration of divinity can men understand what true beauty is, what real love is, and how one ought to love, so great is the power of the amatory faculty and so great its sublimity.

Therefore, go far from this heavenly feast, ye profane, go hence, I say, you who, covered with earthly stains and completely given over to Bacchus and Priapus,[9] cast down the heavenly gift of love upon the earth and into the mud, in the manner of swine. But you, most innocent guests, and all others consecrated to Diana and Pallas,[10] who exult in the freedom of a pure soul and in perpetual joy of mind, come and be welcome. Listen carefully to the divine mysteries revealed to Socrates by Diotima; but before you hear Diotima, we must settle a certain dispute which has risen between

1 *Apology,* 21A.

2 Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (c. 500-430 B. C.) came to Athens in the reign of Pericles, was condemned to death for atheism, but was saved through the influence of Pericles, only to be exiled later. His work, *περὶ φύσεως*, is not extant.

3 Damon, an Athenian sophist, teacher of Pericles. He was known as a student of Prodicus and had great influence on Socrates. Cf. *Diog. Laert.,* ii, 19.

4 Archelaus, an Athenian philosopher, pupil of Anaxagoras.

5 Prodicus the Chian was a sophist contemporary with Socrates, and an ambassador to Athens, where he lectured on literary style.

6 Aspasia (c. 430 B. C.), the celebrated adventuress of Miletus, attracted a circle of cultured and influential Athenians of the Golden Age by her intelligence and personal charm. She later became the mistress and then the lawful wife of Pericles. It was as a teacher of rhetoric that she influenced Socrates, according to the statement of Plato in the *Menexenus,* 236A.

7 Connus, according to the *Menexenus,* 236A, was Socrates' music-teacher. Cf. also, *Euthydemus,* 272C, 205D.

8 Diotima, a priestess of Mantinea, whose existence outside the mind of Plato is doubtful, serves the artistic purpose, in the *Symposium,* of conveying the ideas of Socrates without personal criticism of the previous speakers.

9 Bacchus and Priapus (Dionysius and his son by Aphrodite) were gods of fertility and the sensual pleasures.

10 Diana and Pallas were both virgin goddesses, patrons of Chastity.

those who have discoursed on love in the preceding speeches and those who are about to discuss it. For the previous speakers have called Love Beauty, Goodness, Blessedness, and a God; but Socrates and Diotima disagree, and place Him in a mean position between the beautiful and the ugly, good and bad, blessed and wretched, God and man. We think each opinion is right, but for a different reason.

Love is the Median between Beauty and its Opposite and is both God and Man.[11]

Chapter II

The lodestone confers upon iron a certain quality of its own by which the iron, made like the stone, is drawn to it. This attraction, inasmuch as it rises in the stone and attracts toward the stone, is said to be certainly the stone's attraction, but inasmuch as it is in the iron, it is equally the iron's and the stone's, for the magnetism is not in the pure matter of the iron of course, but in the iron conditioned by the magnetism of the stone. Therefore it includes the property of each.

So fire, to express it more clearly, by its own quality, that is, heat, kindles the flax. The flax, lifted up by the quality of the heat, flies out into the higher region of the fire. This flying out, inasmuch as it is produced from fire and inclines to fire, we call clearly fiery; inasmuch as it is in the flax (not when it is untouched, but only when it has been ignited),[12] we say is of the nature of both, as much of flax as of fire, equally flaxen and fiery.

The appearance of a man, which because of an interior goodness graciously given him by God, is beautiful to see, frequently shoots a ray of his splendor, through the eyes of those looking at him, into their souls. Drawn by this spark like a fish on a hook, the souls hasten toward the one who is attracting them. This attraction, which is love, since it derives from the beautiful, good, and happy, and is attracted to the same things, we do not hesitate to call Goodness, Beauty, Blessedness, and a God, concurring in the judgment of Agathon and the rest of the previous speakers. But since it is in a soul which is already aroused through the presence of that beautiful ray, we are forced to call it a certain mean passion between beauty and the absence of beauty. Since the soul so long as it has received no image of a beautiful thing does not yet love that thing, which is still unknown, as it were; so also one who possesses the whole beauty is not vexed by the prickings of love. For who desires what he has?

Finally, therefore, a soul burns with glowing love when, having found some pleasing image of a beautiful thing, it is aroused by that foretaste to

11 The translation given is of the Italian.

12 Hasse points out that in the theory of the elements which Ficino uses here, combustion was conceived of as a union of the thing with the element of fire (Hasse, p. 238, note 2).

desire full possession of the beauty. When, therefore, the soul of the lover indeed possesses the beautiful thing in part, but also partly does not possess it, it is, rightly, partly beautiful, and partly not.

And so from this mixed nature of love, we assert that it is a certain mean passion between beauty and absence of beauty, sharing in both. For this reason Diotima, to come now to her, called Love a daemon,[13] because just as daemons are the mediaries between heaven and earth, so Love holds the mean position between beauty and lack of beauty. This middle region of love between the beautiful and the unbeautiful nature, Giovanni has explained sufficiently in his first and second speeches.

On the Souls of the Spheres and the Daemons.

Chapter III

Now you shall learn from the words of Diotima in the *Symposium,* of Socrates in the *Phaedrus* and *Philebus,* of the Athenian guest in the *Laws* and of Epinomides, how the daemons inhabit the middle ground between heaven and earth. Plato thinks that the whole machinery of this world is ruled and moved by a certain soul. Indeed, the body of the world is [a kind of body,][14] composed of all the four elements, and its parts are the bodies of all living things, for the little body of every animal is a particle of the world-body. The particle is not composed entirely of the element of fire, air, earth, or water, but is composed of certain parts of each of these elements. Therefore, as the whole is more perfect than the part, in the same measure is the body of the world more perfect than the body of each thing. It would be absurd for an imperfect body to have a soul, and a perfect one neither to have a soul nor to live.[15] For who is so distracted as to say that the part lives but the whole does not? Therefore the whole body of the world lives, since the bodies of animals, which are its parts, live.

Now, there ought to be one soul of the universe, just as there is one matter and one construction. Therefore, since there are twelve spheres in the world, according to Plato,[16] eight in the heavens, and four elements under the heavens, and since these twelve spheres are all separate from each other, different in appearance, movements, and property, they must have twelve souls, different likewise, in appearance and nature. There will be one

13 "The doctrine of demons throughout Plato is conscious poetic and edifying allegory. Cf. *Phaedo,* 107D, 113D; *Rep.,* 617E; *Phaedr.* 240AB; *Laws,* 729E; *Polit.,* 271D; *Laws* 906A, 713D; *Rep.* 540C; *Tim.* 90A, 40D, etc." It gradually blended with Greek mythology and became a more or less seriously accepted tradition. Cf. J. A. Hild, *Etude sur les démons dans la littérature et la religion des grecs* (Paris, 1880). (Shorey, *What Plato Said,* pp. 546-47).

14 Omitted in the Italian.

15 Plato discusses this in some detail, *Laws,* 886A (Hasse, p. 239, note 4).

16 For a brief discussion of Plato's astronomy, see Johnson, pp. 33-37. Plato's astronomical theories are expressed chiefly in the *Timaeus,* and in *Laws,* X.

soul, then, of the one prime matter,[17] and for each of the twelve spheres, there will be a soul.

Who would deny that earth and water, which give life to animals born out of them, themselves live? But if these lowest parts of the world live and are full of living things, why would not air and fire, the nobler parts of the earth, live and similarly have living beings in themselves, and, in the same way, why not the heavens? We see the heavenly beings, (the stars) and those of earth and water, too, but we do not see those of fire or air, naturally, since we do not see the pure element either of fire or of air.

But this is important, that on earth there are two kinds of beings, brute and rational.[18] Likewise in water, since water is a body of nobler standing than the earth, the abundance of rational beings ought to be no less than it is on earth. But the ten higher spheres of the universe, because of their sublimity are peopled with rational creatures only. The soul of the world, that is of prime matter, and the souls of the twelve spheres and of the stars, the Platonists[19] call worldly gods, the foot-followers, as it were, of the Angelic-Mind, and of God. The beings which inhabit the region of ethereal fire located under the moon, or that of the pure air, or that of humid air next to the water, the Platonists call daemons. The rational beings which inhabit the earth they call men. The gods are immortal, and impassible, but men are passible and mortal. Daemons are immortal, of course, but passible. The Platonists do not ascribe the passions of the body to the daemons, but certain emotions of the soul, by which they somehow love good men and hate evil men. They mix agreeably and eagerly in the governing of lower things, but especially of human affairs, and from this friendly service, they all seem good; but some Platonists and the Christian theologists claim that there are other certain bad daemons. For the present we are not concerned with bad daemons. The good daemons, our protectors, Dionysius the Areopagite is accustomed to call by the proper name, Angels, the governors of the lower world, and this differs very little from the interpretation of Plato. Those whom Plato calls gods,[20] and the souls of the spheres and stars, we can, after the manner of Dionysius, call Angels, ministers of God, which is still no different from what Plato called them; for, as appears in the 10th Book of *Laws,* Plato does not in the least bind spirits of this kind within the narrow limits of the spheres, as he does the souls of earthly creatures in

17 The concept of *materia prima* is not properly Platonic, but Aristotelian, though Plato was the first Hellenic philosopher who recognized the nature of matter and tried to define it (*Timaeus,* 49A). According to Aristotle, matter was a thing undefinable either quantitatively or qualitatively (*Metaphysics,* VI, 3). The soul (ψυχή) means here the organizing and vitalizing principle (Hasse, p. 239, note 5).

18 "Rational" beings includes both supernatural beings and men (Hasse, p. 239, note 6).

19 "Platonists" here refers certainly to the Neoplatonists, Plotinus and Proclus, who gave the names of the gods to the planets, following the suggestion of Plato in the *Timaeus.*

20 These so-called "gods" are ὁρατοὶ καὶ γεννητοὶ θεοί. They are not gods in our sense, but only spiritual or supernatural beings (Hasse, p. 239, note 8).

bodies, but he asserts that they are endowed with such great virtue by the supreme God that they are able to enjoy the vision of God at once, and they are able without any labor or care to rule and move the globes of the world according to the will of their father, and by moving them, easily govern lower creatures. Therefore it is rather a difference in words between Plato and Dionysius than a difference in meaning.

On the Seven Gifts which are Given by God to Man through Median Spirits.

Chapter IV

To the ideas of all things which the divine Mind contains, the gods following them are said to be subordinate, and to the gifts of the gods, the daemons. For, to go from the highest to the lowest level, they all go through a mediary in such a way that the ideas, which are the concepts of the divine Mind, distribute their gifts to man through the medium of the gods and daemons. Among these gifts, seven are preeminent: nicety of observation, ability to govern, conviction, clarity of sense perception, ardor of love, keenness of insight, and fecundity of generation.

God first contains the capacity for these gifts in Himself. Then to the seven gods who move the seven planets, and whom we call Angels, He distributes the power of these gifts so that each of the gods takes one in preference to the other [according to the properties of his own nature].[21] They in turn grant them to the seven kinds of subservient daemons, each one especially to his own, and these then hand them on to men.[22] Doubtless, God infuses these gifts into the souls as soon as they are born from Him; the souls, slipping down out of the milky way through Cancer into a body, are draped in a certain heavenly and clear wrap, clothed in which, they are then enclosed in earthly bodies. For the order of nature requires that the perfectly pure soul cannot descend into this more impure body until it receives a certain median and pure garment, which, since it is baser than the soul, but purer and finer than this body, is judged by the Platonists to be the most fitting copula of the soul with the earthly body.[23]

Hence it happens that the souls of the planets establish and strengthen in our souls, and their bodies in our bodies, (the powers of) those seven

21 The bracketed passage is in the Italian only.

22 The Italian reads only "daemons, according to the same proportion. Doubtless God . . ."

23 This "median garment" is the spirit, "a *tertium quid* devised by the scholastics to solve the problem of the connection between body and soul." Spirit is throughout body, in much the same way that the soul is throughout the body for Lucretius. Spirit is, as it were, the medium of the soul, as it gives life and activity through it to the body. Both spirit and body are considered as products of the soul: "spiritus quidem et corpus opus est animae, opus vero proprium omnia diligunt" (*Theol. Plat.* VII, c. 6, p. 177 cited by Saitta, pp. 188-89). Hasse points out some of the origins of the theory in the *Timaeus*, Plotinus, the Hermetic writings, and the so-called Chaldaic Oracle (*op. cit.*, p. 239, note 10).

gifts which were given us in the beginning by God. Attendant upon this same process are as many kinds of daemons, mediaries between heavenly beings and men. Saturn strengthens our power of observation through the Saturnian daemons; Jupiter gives us the power of governing and ruling through the service of Jovian daemons; Mars through the Martian daemon gives us greatness of soul; the Sun through the Solar daemons gives us sensation and clarity of perception, whence comes prophecy. Venus inspires love through Venerian daemons; Mercury promotes skill in speaking and keenness of insight through Mercurial intercessors, and finally, Luna fosters the function of generation by the agency of Lunar daemons.

Although the daemons bestow the capacity for these virtues on all men, they do so especially to those at whose conception and birth they are strongest in the disposition of the heavens. Although the divinely infused qualities are really honorable ones, they can, nevertheless, sometimes seem disgraceful in us, when we abuse them. This is clear in our exercise of governing, conviction, love, and procreation.

But lest we digress further, we received the instinct of love from the highest God, from Venus, who is called a goddess, and from Venerian daemons. Inasmuch as Love has its source in God, it should be called a God, but inasmuch as it is established in us by daemons, it should be called a daemon. For this reason Love is justly called, by Agathon a God, by Diotima a daemon, and by me a Venerian daemon.

On the Ranks of the Daemons of Venus, and How They Shoot [the Arrows of] Love.

Chapter V

But the Venerian daemon is [said to be][24] a triple Love. The first is placed by the Platonists in the heavenly Venus, that is, in the Intelligence itself, of the Angelic Mind; the second is placed in the earthly Venus, in that power of generation, which the World-Soul has. These two are called daemons because they are the mediaries between lack of beauty and beauty, as we mentioned above, and shall explain more fully a little later. The third love is the order of daemons who are the companions of the planet, Venus.

Of these Venerian daemons also we certainly distinguish three ranks. Some are assigned to the element of fire; others to that of the pure air, and others to that of the misty and cloudy air, but all are called (from the Greek word Ἔρως, which means *Love*), Ἔρωτες, which means love-gods. The first type casts missiles of love at those men in whom bile, the choleric and fiery humor, dominates; the second at those in whom blood, the airy humor, dominates, and the third at those in whom phlegm and black bile, the watery and earthy humors, rule. Love's arrows wound all men, to be sure, but especially men of these four humors. For Plato pointed out in the *Phaedrus*[25]

24 The bracketed passage is in the Italian only.

25 *Phaedrus*, 252 ff.

that souls of Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, and Juno, that is, of the followers of Venus, are the most likely to be wounded, are prone to love from their earliest creation, and are usually loved by men who were born under the same stars. Hence, Jovians are strongly attracted by Jovians, Martians by Martians, and so with the rest.

In what Way Men are Captured by Love.

Chapter VI

Now, apply what I say of one as an example, to the other three. Any soul which falls into an earthly body under the influence of Jupiter, in its very descent conceives a certain form for making a man, corresponding to the planet of Jupiter. It expressed this form very accurately in its own celestial body which is best adapted to receive it. If [when it falls] on the earth, it finds a seed likewise well adapted, it fashions in it also a third figure, like the first and second. But if the seed is not well adapted, then the figure is not so much like the first and second.

It frequently happens in fact that two souls may descend at different times, but still in the reign of Jupiter. One of them, finding a suitable seed on the earth, may have shaped out most accurately suitable a body according to those earlier ideas. The other may likewise even have begun a work, but because of the unsuitability of its material, its body will not have been carried out with such great fidelity to its pattern. The first body, therefore, is more beautiful than the second. Both, because of a certain similarity of nature, please each other, but the one which is said to be more beautiful between them pleases the more. Hence, it happens that a man loves, not always those who are most beautiful, but his own, that is, those who have a like birth, even though they may be less beautiful than many others.

In like manner, those who, as we said, are born under the same star, are so constituted, that the image of the more beautiful of the two flowing through the eyes into the soul of the other, corresponds to and agrees completely with a like image formed from its very generation both in the celestial body and in the inner part of the soul. The soul, thus struck, recognizes that image meeting it, as something its own. But even if that image is as much as possible like the one which the soul itself already possesses, and if the soul should wish to fashion that image in its own body, it could not; it immediately compares that image with its own interior [Idea] and if anything is lacking to the image to be a perfect representation of the Jovial body, the soul restores it by reforming, and then loves the reformed image itself as its own work. Hence it happens that lovers are so deceived that they think a person is more beautiful than he is. For in the course of time, they do not see the loved one in his true image received through the senses, but they see him in an image already remade by the soul according to the likeness of its own Idea, an image which is more beautiful than the body itself. Moreover, they wish to see continuously that body whence the image

first came. For although the soul, when the body is absent, may preserve its image in itself, and that is usually enough for it, the spirit and the eyes, the instrument of the soul, do not preserve it. There appear to be really three things in us: soul, spirit, and body. Soul and body, naturally very different from each other, are joined by the median, spirit, which is a certain very thin and clear vapor, created through the heat of the heart from the purest part of the blood; and thence diffused through all the parts. This spirit receives the powers of the soul and transfers them into the body. On the other hand, the spirit receives through the instruments of the senses the images of external bodies; these images cannot be communicated directly to the soul, because incorporeal substance, which is more excellent than bodies, cannot be given form by them through the reception of images. But at least, the soul, being present to the spirit in every part, easily sees the images of bodies shining in it as though in a mirror, and through them it judges bodies, and this cognition is called by the Platonists sense perception. While it sees these images, it conceives in itself by its own strength images like them, but much purer. Conception of this kind we call imagination and fancy; the images conceived here are kept in the memory. Through these, the eyes of the soul[26] are wakened to behold the Universal Ideas of things which the soul holds within itself. Therefore it sees a certain man by sense and conceives him in imagination, and in common with its own innate Idea of humanity, by the intellect it contemplates the principle and definition common to all men, [and it preserves what has been contemplated.][27]

Therefore, for the soul preserving in memory the image of a handsome man, once conceived and reformed in itself, it would be enough to have seen the loved one at some time. But to the eye and spirit, which like a mirror receive images when the body is present and lose them when it is absent, the presence of the beautiful body itself is necessary for them to shine continuously with its brilliance and be charmed and pleased. Therefore, because of their own poverty, they demand the presence of the body, and the soul, being very compliant with them, is led to desire the same thing.

On the Birth of Love.

Chapter VII

But now let us return to Diotima. After she had shown that love, for the reasons we have mentioned, is included among the number of the daemons, she described to Socrates the origin of Love, in this way: "On the

26 According to Hasse, this idea corresponds to the πνεῦμα of Aristotle and Galen (Hasse, p. 240, note 15). The activity of the intellect, the so-called "eye of the soul" in recognizing the Ideas, and through them, God, is the highest function of man; the activity of the soul, according to Ficino, is the generation of his own kind, which is a lower function. It is for this reason that the Angelic Mind is placed above the World-Soul in the scale of being. The proper activity or function of man is what Ficino calls a "perpetual ratiocination."

27 The bracketed clause is not in the Italian.

birthday of Venus, while the Gods were feasting, Porus,[28] the son of Thought, drunk with a draught of nectar, lay with Penia in the garden of Jove, and from this union was born Love."[29]

"On the birthday of Venus," that is, when the Angelic Mind, and the World-Soul, which, for the reason we have mentioned elsewhere,[30] we have called Venuses, were born from the supreme majesty of God.

"While the gods were feasting," that is, while Uranus, Saturn, and Jupiter were enjoying their own goods. For when the Intelligence in the Angelic Mind, and the power of generation in the World-Soul which we have properly called twin Venuses were coming into the light, that supreme God whom we call Uranus was already existent. Moreover, essence and life, which we call Saturn and Jupiter, were in the Angelic Mind; and also in the World-Soul was the cognition of the divine, and the moving of heavenly bodies, which we again call Saturn and Jupiter.

"Porus and Penia" mean plenty and poverty. "Porus is the son of Thought," that is, the spark of the supreme God. God is called Thought, of course, and the fountain of thought, because He is the truth and the goodness of everything. In His light every thought becomes true. Toward His goodness every thought tends.

By "the garden of Jupiter" Diotima means the richness of the Angelic life into which, when Porus, that is the light of God, of course, descends, and mixes with Penia, that is the former lack of the light, he creates love. In the beginning, the Angelic Mind exists and has its being through God, therefore for these two, essence, and life, it is called Saturn, and Jupiter. It has, moreover, the power of understanding, which we call Venus. Power of this sort is of its very nature formless and dark unless it is illuminated by God, just like the strength of the eye before the arrival of the sun. We call this obscurity Penia, of course, since it is a lack of and a deficiency of light. Moreover, that power of understanding, by a certain natural instinct directed toward its own divine parent, receives from Him a beam which is Porus, or plenty. In this as though in a kind of seed, the causes[31] of all things are included. By the flames of this beam that natural instinct is kindled; this fire, this ardor rising from its former darkness, from this spark rising to flame is Love, born of Poverty and Plenty, "in the garden of Jupiter," that is, under the shadow of life; and naturally so since after the vigor[32] of life, immediately arises a passionate desire for understanding.

28 According to Shorey (*What Plato Said,* p. 547) 'poros' [porus] means *Resource,* rather than *plenty.* It has been translated *plenty* here, because that seems to be the sense in which Ficino has taken it throughout.

29 *Symposium,* 203.

30 Cf. Speech II, chapter 7 *supra.*

31 The Italian reads *cagione.*

32 Hasse translates, "immediately after its entrance into life," which follows logically from the shadow of life discussion. The Latin phrase is *vigor vitae,* which in untranslatable in this context. The Italian reads *dopo il vigore della Vita.*

But why do they say that Porus was drunk from nectar? Because he was overflowing with the liquor[33] of divine vivacity.

Why is Love partly rich and partly poor? Because we are accustomed to desire neither what we completely possess nor what we altogether lack, for everyone seeks what he lacks; but what else can a man want who has everything he wants? Moreover, since no one wants something he knows nothing about, we must have known what we love in some way before; and not only have known it, for we usually dislike many things we know, but have thought it useful and pleasing as well. But even that does not seem to be enough for burning affection unless we think we can easily attain what we have judged will be pleasant. Therefore, a man who loves something does not yet really possess it completely in actuality. Nevertheless, he knows the thing itself in the reflection of his soul; he judges it pleasing, and trusts to be able to attain it. This contemplation, judgment, and hope are like some present anticipation of an absent good. For he would not desire it unless the thing itself pleased him, and it would not please him unless it were in some way pretasted. Therefore, since lovers partly have and partly have not what they seek, it is very true that love is a combination of a certain poverty and plenty.

For this reason, that heavenly Venus, aroused by the first sensation of the divine light itself, is drawn by love to the whole richness of the full light, and by this force clinging more closely to her parent, she glows immediately with His fullest light; and those concepts of things, which before had been confused and involved with the light which we call Porus, are freed now as the passion of Venus clings [to God] and being separate, they shine more clearly. Just as the Angelic Mind cleaves to God, so does the World-Soul cleave to the Angelic Mind and to God, for, turning from those toward the Supreme, it also receives light in exactly the same way, and is kindled and begets Love, which participates in both Plenty and Poverty. Hence, adorned by the forms of all things, it moves the heavens according to the pattern of these forms, and through the power of generating it creates forms like them in the matter of the elements.

Here again we come upon the twin Venuses: one clearly the ability of the soul to know divinity; the other, the ability of the soul to propagate lower forms. The former is not proper to the soul, but an imitation of the Angelic contemplation. The latter, however, is proper to the nature of the soul. And so, whenever we say there is one Venus in the Soul, we mean its own peculiar force, its own Venus; but when we say there are two, one is proper to the Angelic Mind, and the other to the soul itself.

Therefore, let there be two Venuses in the soul, the one heavenly, the other earthly. Let them both have a love, the Heavenly for the reflection upon divine beauty, the earthly for generating divine beauty in earthly

33 The Italian reads *rugiáda,* 'dew,' and Hasse has so translated it. All the Latin editions, however, read *ratione.* The difficulty rises out of *rone,* the abbreviation for *ratione,* which looks like *rore,* the ablative of "dew."

matter. The beauty which the former sees, the latter wants with all its power to embody in a worldly creation. No, rather, each has as its end the generation of beauty, but each in its own way. The heavenly Venus, by its own intelligence, tries to reproduce in itself the most exact beauty of the divine; the earthly, by the fertility of the divine seeds tries to prepare in earthly matter the beauty divinely conceived in itself. The Heavenly love we therefore call a God, because it is directed toward the divine; but we usually call it a daemon because it is the mean between poverty and plenty; the other love we always call a daemon because it seems to have a certain kindly disposition toward the body, and to be more inclined toward the lower region of the world. This, of course, is foreign to the nature of God, being in accordance, rather, with the nature of daemons.

In all Souls there are Two Loves, but in Ours There Are Five.

Chapter VIII

These twin Venuses and their twin loves are not only in the World-Soul, but also in the souls of the spheres, the stars, daemons, and men. Since all souls in the natural order are referred to that first soul, it is also necessary to refer the loves of them all to the love of that so that they all hang from it in some way.

Therefore Diotima used to refer to these former loves simply as daemons, but that one great love she called "the great daemon," which, lying in everything throughout the whole universe, allows no heart to sleep, but everywhere arouses it to loving.

But in us, there are found not two only, but five loves. The two extreme ones are daemons, of course, the three median ones are not simple daemons, but desires. Now, in the mind of man there is an eternal love for seeing the divine beauty; thanks to it we pursue the study of philosophy and the practices of justice and piety. There is also in the power of generation a certain mysterious stimulus for propagating offspring. This love is perpetual by which we are tirelessly urged to create in the likeness of our offspring a reflection of that supreme beauty.

These two loves in us are perpetual. Of those two daemons which Plato warns are always present in our souls, one raises us to the heights, the other plunges us to the depths; one is a benevolent spirit, that is, a good daemon; the other is a malevolent spirit, that is, a bad daemon.[34] But in reality, both are good, since the creation of offspring is considered just as necessary and honorable as the quest after truth. But the second has been called bad since it often disturbs us on account of our abuse of it; and turns the soul aside from its own good, which consists in the contemplation of the truth, and directs it toward baser pursuits.

34 Hasse (p. 241, note 19) points out the parallel between these two daemons and the two horses of the soul in the *Phaedrus*.

Between these two extremes, there are three loves in us which, however, since they are not in the soul in the same way as those two most firmly established ones, but begin, grow, decrease, and cease, will better be called emotions or passions than daemons. Of these, one is equidistant from the two extreme ones; the other two lie between the mid-point and either extreme. Further, if the appearance of some body, because of the excellent preparation of its matter, is especially like the idea of it in the divine mind, then, when the appearance meets the eyes, and through the eyes penetrates into the soul, the appearance immediately pleases the soul, since it agrees with those concepts which, like models of the thing itself, were divinely infused in us from the beginning, and which both the mind and the power of generation perpetuate. Hence, as we said, a triple Love arises, for we are born or reared with an inclination to the contemplative, the practical, or the voluptuous life. If to the contemplative, we are lifted immediately from the sight of bodily form to the contemplation of the spiritual and divine. If to the voluptuous, we descend immediately from the sight to the desire to touch. If to the practical and moral, we remain in the pleasures only of seeing and the social relations. People of the first type are of such strength of character that they are exalted most highly; those of the last type are so weak that they are pressed to the depths, but those of the middle type remain in the middle region.

And so all love begins with sight. But the love of the contemplative man ascends from sight into the mind; that of the voluptuous man descends from sight into touch, and that of the practical man remains in the form of sight. Love of the first is attracted to the highest daemon rather than to the lowest, that of the second is drawn to the lowest rather than to the highest, and that of the last remains an equal distance from both. These three loves have three names: love of the contemplative man is called divine; that of the practical man human; and that of the voluptuous man, animal.

What Passions are in Lovers because of the Mother of Love.

Chapter IX

We have thus far said that Love is a daemon born of Plenty and Poverty, and that it is divided into five types. We shall next discuss, from the words of Diotima, what passions in Lovers rise from the nature of this kind of Love.

> "Since Love was born on the birthday of Venus, He reveres and worships Venus and is carried away by a desire for the beautiful, since Venus herself is most beautiful. Because Love is the son of Poverty, He is spare and thin, rough, bare-footed, humble, homeless, sleeping without bed or roof, at the doorsteps, on the street, under the sky, and finally, is always poor.
>
> "Because he is the son of Plenty, He lies in wait for the beautiful and the good. He is manly, brave, bold, virile, a clever and ex-

> perienced hunter, always contriving some new plot or other, eloquent, a philosopher all his life, a magician, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, enchanter, sorcerer, and sophist. He is neither completely immortal by nature, nor entirely mortal. Sometimes he is born and thrives in the same day whenever He overflows; and then he dies and revives again because of the nature of his father, but what he has won he deserts, and so Love is neither a beggar nor ever a rich man either. Moreover he is situated in the mean between wisdom and ignorance."[35]

This is what Diotima says. We shall explain these statements as briefly as we can.

Although these qualities exist in all kinds of Love, they seem more clear in the three middle kinds, which are more evident to us. "Since Love was born on the birthday of Venus, He follows Venus," that is, born with those higher spirits whom we call Venuses, He leads the souls of men back to the supreme.

"He is seized with a desire for the beautiful, since Venus herself is most beautiful"; that is, Love kindles souls with a desire for the supreme divine beauty, since Love himself had His origin in these spirits which, being next to God, are bathed in the glow of God, and to that same glow lift us.

Moreover, since the life of all animals and plants and the fertility of the earth consists in warmth and moisture, in order to show Love's poverty, Diotima infers that He lacks both, moisture as well as warmth, when she says He is dry, thin, and squalid. For who would not know that the things which lack moisture are arid and dry? Likewise, who would say that pallor and squalor[36] come from anything else than the lack of sanguine heat? Mortals are made thin and pale by constant love because the power of nature is certainly not strong enough for two tasks at once. The attention of the soul of a lover is completely centered in the assiduous contemplation of the loved one. In this all the energy of the natural constitution is concentrated, and so it does not even digest the food in the stomach perfectly, whence it happens that the greater part is omitted with whatever else is left over, and the minor part, and that indeed raw, is drawn to the liver. Here, for the same reason, it is badly digested, and so from it only a little raw blood is diffused through the veins.[37] Wherefore, all the parts grow weak and pale because of the scarcity and crudity of their food.

Moreover, to whatever the serious attention of the soul is directed, to that also fly the spirits, which are the chariots or vehicles of the soul. The spirits are created in the heart from the finest part of the blood. To the image of the loved one fixed in the fancy and to the loved one himself, the soul of the lover is attracted. The spirits are drawn to the same place. Flying

35 *Symposium,* 203C-E.
36 The Italian translates: *giallura* and *squalidezza.*
37 The pathology of Ficino is the so-called pathology of the "humors," which derived its central theory from Hippocrates and Galen. It is the accepted physiological theory of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

thither, they are quickly spent and so in order for the consumed vapors to be regenerated there must be a frequent outpouring of pure blood. All of the finer and clearer parts of the blood are continually exhausted in regeneration of the spirits; therefore, since the clear and pure blood is used up, there remain only the impure, thick, dry, and black parts. Hence the body dries out and grows rough, and hence lovers become melancholy. For from the dry, thick, and black blood, melancholy, that is, black bile, is made, which fills the head with its vapors, dries out the brain, and unceasingly vexes the soul day and night with fearful, hideous images. As we read, this is what happened to the Epicurean philosopher Lucretius,[38] because of love. Vexed first by love and then by madness, he finally committed suicide. This has happened usually to those who, neglecting contemplative love, have turned to a passion for physical embrace. For we bear much more easily the desires for seeing, than those of both seeing and touching the desired one.

When ancient physicians observed these phenomena, they said that love was a kind of melancholy humor and passion of melancholy; the physician Rhazes[39] prescribed that it be cured by coitus, hunger, inebriation and exercise. Not only does love render men melancholy, but anyone who is naturally of that temperament is more susceptible to love. Such, moreover, are those in whom bile, which they call choler, or black bile, which they call melancholy, prevails over the other humors. Bile is hot and dry; black bile is dry and cold. The former holds the place of fire in the body of living beings, the latter, the place of earth. Therefore, the arid and dry melancholics represent an image of earth, and squalid and pale cholerics one of fire.

Choleric people because of the force of the fiery humor are borne headlong into love. Melancholic people on account of the sluggishness of the earthly humor love more slowly, but because of the stability of the humor itself, after they are once caught, they love for a long time. Rightly therefore, love is pictured as dry and squalid, since men who are of this nature usually indulge in love more than others. This, we think, results especially from the fact that cholerics are burned by the fire of bile. The melancholy are eaten away by the sharpness of the black bile, as Aristotle states in the seventh book of the *Ethics.*[40] And so an annoying humor always torments and drives both kinds to seek some great and lasting relief against the perpetual annoyance of these humors.

The delights of music and love are reliefs of this nature [i. e., great and lasting]; for to no other pleasures can we so unceasingly devote ourselves as to the delights of music and voices, and the pleasures of [physical] beauty.

38 Ancient tradition said that Lucretius suffered fits of insanity and committed suicide at the age of forty-four. Cf. Tennyson's *Lucretius.*
39 The Arabian physician Rhazes (Abu Becr Mohammed Ibn Aakeriya Ar-Razi, c. 850-923/932), was the author of a number of medical treatises, particularly one entitled *περὶ Λοιμικοῦς* on measles and smallpox. He was known as the Arabian Galen.
40 *Eth. Nicom.* VII, c. 15.

The rest of the senses are quickly satisfied, but sight and hearing feed much longer upon small sounds and empty appearance. And the pleasures of these senses are not only more lasting, but are more closely related to the human constitution, for what is more agreeable to the spirits of the human body than the voices and faces of men; especially of those who are pleasing not only because of similarity of nature, but also because of their beauty? Therefore, the choleric and melancholic men pursue, as if the only remedy and solace for their most troublesome complexion of those humors, the pleasures of song and physical form. Therefore they are more prone to the charms of Venus.

Socrates, whom Aristotle judged melancholy,[41] was, as he himself avowed, more inclined to the art of love than other men, and I can say the same of Sappho, as she herself testifies; and our Virgil,[42] whom his bust shows to have been a choleric, although chaste, was nevertheless disposed to love.

"Love is bare-footed." Diotima so describes Him, because the lover is so occupied with amatory affairs that, in the rest of the affairs of life, public as well as private, he does not walk carefully as he ought to but is carried indiscriminately in any direction without the foresight of any danger.[43] Therefore, in his progress, he encounters frequent dangers, like those who wear no shoes, and whose feet are therefore hurt by innumerable thorns and pebbles.

"Humble." The Greek word of Plato[44] *χαμαιπετής* means "on the ground" and "flying through the depths." For he sees that often lovers, because of the abuse of love, live out of their senses, and great goods waste away because of lack of attention. They clearly give themselves up so much to their loved ones that they try to transform themselves into them in nature and imitate them in themselves with words and deeds. Who does not become effeminate and childish with the constant imitation of boys and girls? Who doing this does not become a boy or girl?

"Without a home." The soul itself is the home of human thought. The spirit is the home of the soul, and the home of the spirit is the body. There are three inhabitants and three homes. Each of these is exiled when its natural home is lost. For all thought is devoted not to the disciplined tranquillity of its own soul, but to the service of the loved one; the soul abandons attendance upon its own body, and tries to leap across into the body of the loved one. The spirit, the chariot of the soul, when the soul hastens to another, also flies out to another. Hence thought leaves its home,

41 Aristotle, *Problems*, Sect. XXX, 1 (Hasse, p. 243, note 26).

42 This remark is based on the biography of Vergil by Servius, in which he says Vergil *impatiens libidinis fuit* (Hasse, p. 243, note 28).

43 The Italian reads *periculo*.

44 Ficino translates Plato's *χαμαιπετής* by *humi volans*. Hasse (p. 243, note 30) points out that today we derive the word from *πίπτω*, and not from *πέτομαι*.

the soul leaves its, and the spirit leaves its. The departure of thought is accompanied by madness and stupefaction, that of the soul by debility and the fear of death, and that of the spirit by trembling of the heart and difficult breathing. Thereby Love is deprived of its own Lares, its natural home, and its hoped-for rest.

"Without bed or covering," for Love has no place to rest, nor anything with which to cover Himself, for since everything seeks its own origin, the little blaze of love that is kindled in the desire of the lover by the presence of a beautiful body likewise tries to return to its own body. By this force it carries with it, in flying off, both the desired and the desirer. O, hard lot of lovers! O, life more wretched than any death, unless perchance your soul snatched from its own body by this violence of love, forgets also the appearance of the loved one and takes refuge in the temple of divine beauty, where at last it will find rest and satisfaction.

Likewise who would deny that Love wanders about naked, "without covering"? For who can conceal Love, whom a wild, ox-like, fixed stare betrays, whom halting speech reveals, whom both blushing and pale countenance, frequent sighing, tossing of the limbs, perpetual complaining, importunate praise, sudden indignation, boasting, impudence, petulance, vain suspicion, and the most trifling attentions, testify against? Just as in the sun and fire the light of the glow accompanies its heat, so these external evidences follow the internal fire of love.

"He sleeps on doorsteps." The doors of the soul seem to be the eyes and the ears, for through these many things are carried into the soul, and the desires of the soul and its nature clearly shine out through the eyes. A lover spends most of his time looking at the face of the loved one and listening to his voice. Rarely does his mind withdraw into itself. More often it wanders out through the eyes and ears, and so lovers are said to sleep at doorsteps. They are said also to "lie in the road." For bodily beauty should be a sort of road by which we ascend to the higher beauty, but those who prostrate themselves before base pleasures, or even indulge in viewing them more than is fitting, seem to stand in the road itself and not at all to set out for the end of it. "Under the open sky," rightly, too, for being preoccupied with only one thing within, they consider nothing in the affairs of the world around them, and so, living life by chance, they are exposed to all the dangers of fortune, as those who lead a life in the nude under the sky are exposed to all storms.

Because of the nature of his mother, "Love is always needy." Clearly, since the first origin of Love was from poverty, and what is innate cannot be completely extirpated, Love is always needy, and always in want, for as long as something is not yet attained, the fire of Love burns. When the whole thing is possessed, with the cessation of need, desire ceases also, rather than endure without need.

What Characteristics of Lovers are due to the Father of Love?

Chapter X

These qualities derive from the mother of Love, Poverty; but opposite qualities rise from his father, Plenty. What these opposites are anyone may discern when he understands the previous reasoning. Above, Love was described as simple, careless, common, and weak; here the opposites of these are brought in, for He is said to be a "skilful hunter, wise, a plotter, a schemer, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, a philosopher, manly, and bold, strong, eloquent, a magician and sophist." The same Love which makes a lover stupid and lifeless in other affairs, in affairs of love makes him clever and industrious, so that in wonderful ways he plots for the pleasure of his loved one, snares him with trickery, delights him by his attentions, charms him with eloquence, or wins him with song. The same frenzy which made him flattering in his attention furnishes him arms; ferocity when he is incensed against the loved one, and strength and invulnerability when he is fighting for him.

Love, as we have said, has its origin in sight. Sight is halfway between thought and touch, and hence the soul of the lover is always distracted and tossed backwards and forwards. Sometimes a desire for physical embrace arises, and sometimes a chaste desire for the heavenly beauty; first the one and then the other conquers and leads. In those who have been well brought up, and are strong in keenness of mind, the latter desire wins; in others the former is more often the victor.

Those who lower themselves to the depths of carnal pleasures are justly considered dry, bare, lowly, helpless, and dull: "dry" because they are always hungry and never are sated; "bare" because, like the rash, they are considered disgraceful. They are "lowly" because they think about nothing high or nothing great; they are "helpless" because they give in to shameful desire; "dull" because they are so stupid that they do not know where Love is leading them, and they stay in the road instead of pushing on to its end.

Men of the opposite type seem to be oppositely affected, for they enjoy the true goods of the soul, they are more satisfied, and they are pleased more quietly; they observe chastity, disregard the shadowy attraction of the body and are lifted above it, and as though defended by force of arms, they banish vain pleasures from them and subject their senses to the rule of reason. They are most skillful, and most wise of all, and they so philosophize that they prudently advance through the forms of bodies as though through some kind of track, or scent, and by means of these they skillfully track down the holy beauty of the soul and divinity; and hunting thus wisely, they happily catch their quarry.

Certainly this so great reward of Love has its origin in His father, Plenty, since the light of beauty, which is both Plenty and the father of Love, has this virtue, that it is directed back to that whence it has come

and with it draws anyone who loves it. It descends first from God; going across into the Angelic Mind and the World-Soul as if through glass, and from the Soul going easily out into the Body prepared to receive it, from the body itself of a young man, it shines out, especially through the eyes, the clear windows of the soul; it flies through the air, and then, penetrating the eyes of an older man, transfixes his soul, kindles his desire, and then leads the wounded heart and the kindled desire to their healing and cooling, and takes them with it ascending to that from which it had descended, step by step, first to the body of the loved one, then to his soul, then to the Angelic Mind, and finally to God, the first origin of this glow.

This is the fruitful hunt, this the successful chase of lovers. This is the kind of hunting, according to Plato in the *Protagoras*,[45] which a certain friend of his attributed to our Socrates. "Whence come you, Socrates?" he says. "I suppose you have come from that chase to which the fine appearance of Alcibiades always arouses you."

Morover, Love is called a sophist and magician. Plato defines a sophist in the dialogue entitled *The Sophist*[46] as a pretentious and crafty debater who proves for us by crafty quibblings the false instead of the true, and who forces those who argue with him to contradict themselves in their arguments. This lovers suffer as well as loved ones, since lovers, blinded by the clouds of love, accept the false for the true, in thinking their loves are more beautiful, wiser, and better than they really are. They contradict themselves because of the violence of their love, for reason persuades them of one thing, and desire pursues another. They change their minds at the command of the loved one; they reverse their own opinions in order to agree with those of another. Often the beautiful are caught by the wiles of lovers, and become tractable even though they may before have been obstinate.

But why do we think love is a sorcerer? Because in love there is all the power of enchantment. The work of enchantment is the attraction of one thing by another because of a certain similarity of their nature.[47] The parts of this world, like the parts of a single animal, all hanging from one author,[48] are joined to each other by the mutuality of one nature. So, just as in our bodies the brain, lungs, heart, liver, and the rest of the parts all require something from each other, help each other and all suffer when one of them suffers, so in the same way the parts of this huge animal, that is, all the bodies of the world, joined together, exchange natures with each

45 The first words of the dialogue.
46 *Sophist*, 231D-E
47 Here again appears the basic conception of Ficino's philosophy of Love, that it is the fundamental force uniting and motivating the whole world. The conception is larger and more appealing than that of Plotinus because it is more Christian. Ficino's love is not merely the abstraction of Plotinus; it has the warmth of Christian love as well. His argument here seems sophistic to the modern reader, but it was only in terms of what his readers were familiar with that he could convey the infinite implications of his conviction.
48 The Italian reads *da uno Amore.*

other and are mutually exchanged. From their common relation a common love is born, and from that love a common attraction, and this is true enchantment.

Thus, from the concavity of the orb of the moon, because of the congruity of its nature, fire is drawn up; from the concavity of fire, the air; from the center of the world the earth is drawn toward the depths, and from its own place also is drawn the water. Hence also the magnet draws iron, amber draws the chaff, sulphur the fire, the sun turns many flowers and leaves toward itself, the moon attracts the seas, and Mars always rouses the winds, and the various kinds of plants also attract to themselves various kinds of animals. In human affairs, also, each man is drawn by his own desires.

The functions of enchantment therefore are those of nature; but art is its assistant. For whenever there is not a complete correspondence of every part in nature, art, through vapors, numbers, and figures, supplies the appropriate qualities at appropriate times;[49] just as in agriculture nature brings forth the plants, and art prepares the soil. This art the ancients attributed to the daemons because the daemons understand what the relationship of natural things is, what is related to each thing, and how the harmony of things can be restored wherever it is lacking. Some philosophers are said to have been friends of the daemons either because of a certain similarity of their natures, such as Zoroaster and Socrates, or because of their adoration, such as Apollonius Tyaneus and Porphyry.[50] And so the daemons are said to have come to them in signs, voices, and portents when they were awake and in revelations and visions when they were asleep. Therefore through their friendship with the daemons, they seem to have become enchanters like the daemons, because they know the friendship of natural things; thus all nature, from its mutual love, is called an enchantress.

Now anyone beautiful bewitches us through our vulnerable eyes. These bewitchers win over and snare their loved ones with the powers of rhetoric and the metres of poetry, as though with some incantation; moreover, they overcome and take possession of them with worship and rewards exactly as though with magic potions. Therefore, no one doubts that Love is an enchanter, since the whole power of enchantment rests in love, and the work of love is effected by bewitchment, magic spells, and potions.

49 The Italian says, "through vapors, qualities, numbers, and figures, as in agriculture. . . ."

50 Zoroaster was said to have had visions of Ahuramazda and to have been in close communion with the spirits, as Socrates was with his daemon. Apollonius Tyanaeus was a philosopher of about the middle of the first century A. D., well known through the account of his life given by Philostratus. He was probably an eclectic, with Pythagorean training, but he was considered a magician and wonder-worker, and was set up by third and fourth century anti-Christians as the anti-Christ. The teachings of Porphyry include a great deal of discussion about daemons and the proper sacrifices to the gods. Among other principles, he says that no sacrifice is great enough for the highest God.

"Love is neither altogether mortal, nor altogether immortal." He is not completely mortal because the two loves in us which we call daemons, are everlasting; He is not immortal, because the three loves which are in between change every day, grow, and decrease. Moreover, there is an innate, inextinguishable fervor in the desire of man from the very beginning of his life, which does not allow the soul to rest, but always drives it on to apply itself studiously to some particular goal. The types of men differ [and life is not lived by one kind of desire only];[51] hence that continuous fervor of desire which is natural love impels some to the study of letters, others to music and painting, others to nobility of character, or the religious life,[52] others to [political] honors, some to the accumulation of money, many to the indulgence of the stomach, and others to other things, sometimes the same man to different goals at different ages.

So the same fervor is said to be both mortal and immortal; immortal because it is never extinguished and merely changes matter rather than disappears itself; mortal because it does not incline perpetually toward the same thing, but because of either a change of nature, or a satiety rising from long association with the same object, it requires new pleasures, and a fervor which has completely faded away in one thing may somehow come back to life in another. It is called immortal also for the reason that a form once loved is always loved, for as long as the same form remains in the same man, it is loved in that man himself; but when it has left him, the same form which you loved before is no longer in him. You do not love his new form because you had not loved it before; but you do not cease loving that former one; this, however, is the difference: that you saw it before in another, but now you see it only in yourself, and you always will love the same form, fixed in your memory, and as often as it meets the eye of your soul, it kindles your love. Therefore whenever we meet that person whom we formerly loved, we are shaken, our hearts jump or quiver, or our livers melt and our eyes tremble, and our faces turn many colors [like the rainbow when the sun shines opposite the misty air].[53] For his presence suggests to the eyes of the soul in his presence, the form lying dormant in the mind, as though rousing the fire slumbering under the ashes by blowing[54] on it.

For this reason love is said to be immortal. But it is held to be mortal for this reason as well: although the beloved features may remain fixed in our breasts eternally,[55] nevertheless, they do not present themselves to the eye of the mind with invariable strength, and therefore affection seems to glow and fade alternately.

51 The bracketed clause is not in the Italian.

52 The "religious life" means life as a member of the regular, not secular, clergy.

53 Bracketed phrase in the Italian only. The phrase "in his presence" does not appear in the Italian.

54 Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid*, V, 743 "sopitos suscitat ignes."

55 Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid*, IV, 4. Cited by Hasse, p. 244, note 45.

To this is added the fact that neither human nor animal love can ever exist without an accompanying indignation. Who is not outraged by him who has taken his soul from him? For as liberty is the most pleasing of all conditions, so servitude is the most unbearable. And so you love and hate the beautiful at the same time; you hate them as thieves and homicides, you are forced to love and revere them as mirrors reflecting the heavenly light. What are you to do, poor wretch? Where to turn, you do not know, alas, lost soul. You do not know; you would be unwilling to exist with this homicide of yours, but you would be unwilling to live without his blessed presence. You cannot exist with this person who has brought you to ruin and tortures you; but you cannot live without him, who with such wonderful enticements steals you from yourself, and claims all of you for himself. You want to flee him, who burns you with his flames, yet you want to cling to him, so that in clinging close to him himself who possesses you, you may so remain as near yourself as possible. Poor wretch, you seek yourself outside yourself, you cling to your captor so that you may recover your captured self. You do not wish to love madly because you do not wish to die; but you are unwilling not to love, because you think you must pay service to this image of heaven. Wherefore in this alternation it happens that love fades and grows green again from one moment, so to speak, to the next.

Diotima also places Love halfway between wisdom and ignorance. Indeed Love pursues what is beautiful, and most beautiful of all is wisdom, and therefore He desires wisdom. Now, whoever desires freedom does not altogether possess it, for who seeks what he already has? But still, he does not altogether lack it either, for he is wise in this one thing at least, if he recognizes his own ignorance.[56] But he who does not know that he is ignorant, is as unaware of facts themselves as he is of his own ignorance, and he does not seek knowledge which he does not know he lacks. Therefore, with regard to wisdom, love is placed halfway between wisdom and ignorance, because it partly lacks wisdom and is partly wise.

Diotima says this is the nature of love, but the nature of beauty itself, that is, the supreme Beauty is this: it is charming, perfect and blessed. It is charming inasmuch as it attracts toward itself the desire of everything by its own attractiveness; perfect inasmuch as when the things it has attracted approach, it illumines them with its own rays and completes them; and blessed inasmuch as it fills the lighted objects with eternal good.

What is the Benefit of Love According to its Definition.
Chapter XI

After discussing what is the origin of Love, and what sort of God he Himself is, Diotima then explains what is the end of His activities and of what benefit He is to men. We all desire to have goods, and not only to

56 Cf. Plato's *Apology*, 21E.

have them but to have them eternally. The single goods or mortals change and fade and they would all quickly disappear if new ones were not continuously made in place of those which leave. Therefore, so that goods may somehow endure for us forever, we desire to recreate those which pass away. That re-creation is effected by generation. Hence has been born in everyone the instinct for generation. But since generation, by continuation, renders mortal things like divine, it is certainly a divine gift. Because divine things are beautiful, they are opposite to ugly things, and are similar to and consonant with beautiful things. Therefore, generation, which is a divine function, is carried out exactly and easily in that which is beautiful, and the contrary in the opposite. Wherefore the impulse for generation seeks beautiful things and shuns the opposite. In what consists the love of men, you ask, and what end does it serve? The desire of generation in the beautiful so that everlasting life may be preserved in mortal things; this is the love of men living on the earth and this is the goal of our love. For throughout the period in which any mortal is said to live and be the same, as from childhood to old age, although it is said to be the same, nevertheless it never retains the same things within it, but always puts on the new, as Plato says, and it discards the old, with respect to hair, flesh, bones, blood, and the whole body.

Nor is it in the body alone that this happens, but in the soul as well. Customs, habits, opinions, desires, pleasures, griefs, and fears are all continuously changed, nor does any of these remain alike or the same, but when the earlier ones are discarded, new ones succeed them and grow to maturity. But, even more marvelously [knowledge suffers the same fate].[57] Not only does some knowledge disappear and other knowledge rise up in its stead, and we are not always the same with respect to knowledge, but all knowledge suffers the same lot, for meditation and memory are the recovery, as it were, of lost knowledge. Forgetting seems to be the departure of knowledge, but meditation, always restoring a new memory to replace the departed one, preserves knowledge so that it seems to be the same.

In this way are preserved whatever things are changeable in the soul or body, not because they are always altogether the same, for this is the peculiar property of the divine, but because what fades and goes away leaves something new and like itself. By this remedy certainly mortal things become like immortal.

There is therefore, in both parts of the soul, that which supervises mental activity and that which rules the body, an innate love of generation, so that life may be perpetually preserved. The love which is in that part adapted for the ruling of the body impels us from the very beginning to take food and drink, so that by these foods humors may be generated by which may be recovered that which continuously drains from the body. In the adult body, love stimulates the seed itself and arouses the pleasure of

57 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

producing offspring so that what is unable to live forever in itself may live forever preserved in offspring like itself.

The love of generation attributed to the cognitive part of the soul brings it about that the soul desires truth as its own food, through which in its own way it is nourished and grows, and if anything escapes the soul through forgetfulness, or lies torpid because of sloth or lack of care, this love of generation, by diligence of reflection and meditation, regenerates, so to speak, and calls back into the mind what had perished through forgetfulness, or had grown dull through sloth. This love stimulates the soul which has reached maturity with a powerful desire for teaching and writing, so that in knowledge, generated either in writing or in the minds of students, the wisdom of the teacher [and truth][58] may remain eternal among men.

And so, by the beneficence of love the body of every man, as well as his soul, seems to be able to remain forever in human affairs after death. Both loves seek the beautiful. The one which rules and governs the body desires to feed its body upon dishes as charming, pleasant, and beautiful as possible and to generate a handsome offspring by a beautiful woman.[59] The one which pertains to the soul desires to steep the soul in the most beautiful and significant learning, to bring forth a wisdom like itself by polished writing in a beautiful style, and to generate wisdom by teaching, in a beautiful soul (that is, in a pure, keen, and noble soul). Of course, the soul itself we do not see, therefore we cannot observe its beauty. But we see in the body a shadow of the soul, and its image, and judging from its image we conclude that there is a beautiful soul in a handsome body; wherefore we teach handsome men more willingly than others.

On the Two Loves and that the Soul is Born Endowed with Truth.

Chapter XII

We have said enough already about the definition of love; now let us explain what is the distinction in loves in Plato, between fecundity of the Soul and that of the body. This is what Plato says: *In all men, the body is pregnant and rich, and the soul is pregnant also.* The seeds of all parts of a body are sown in it in the very beginning. Hence in the predetermined course of time the teeth come through, the hair grows, the beard grows thick, and the seminal fluid flows down. If the body is rich and heavy with seeds, the soul, being nobler than the body, ought even more certainly to be rich, and possesses the seeds of all its qualities from the beginning also. Therefore the soul possesses from the beginning principles of moral character, talents,

58 Bracketed passage not in the Italian.

59 This mention of woman shows that Ficino is dealing with Christian Neoplatonism, and not that of the Alexandrian Neoplatonists. Pagan Platonic love could occur only between males because only males are equal. Here, it is true, the woman is merely a means to an end, but the motive is still defined as love.

and knowledge whence if it is properly cultivated it brings forth its own offspring in due time. We learn that the soul possesses innate concepts of all its own qualities from its desires, its method of inquiry, its imagination, its judgment, and its comparisons.

Who will deny that the soul, from tender babyhood, desires the true, good, honorable, and beneficial? But no one desires what he does not know. Therefore, there are some notions of those things in the soul even before it desires them; through these notions, like models and examples of the things themselves, it judges them to be desirable.

This is likewise revealed in the soul's inquiry and imagination. If sometime Socrates had to find Alcibiades, and looked for him in a crowd of men,[60] there would have to be in the mind of Socrates some picture of Alcibiades, in order for him to know which man he was seeking, instead of the others; and, if he found Alcibiades in a group of several men, to be able to distinguish him from the others. So the soul would neither seek these four concepts nor find them anywhere unless it had some notion of them, that is, of Truth, Goodness, Nobility, and Utility, through which it would seek them in its search, so that when it found what it had been seeking it might recognize them and distinguish them from their opposites.

Not only from our desires, searchings, and imagination do we prove it, but also by judgment, for everyone who judges someone to be his friend or his enemy knows what friendship or enmity is. How, therefore, would we every day judge many things true or false, good or bad, as we do, and judge them correctly, if there were not in us some preconceived notion of truth and goodness? Or, again, how would many people not even trained in the arts approve and disapprove, often rightly, works of architecture, music, poetry, and the rest of the arts and philosophical theories if there were not a certain Ideal of these things, and concepts assigned to them by nature?

Comparison also proves the same thing to us, for anyone comparing honey with wine and pronouncing one sweeter than the other has some idea of what flavor is sweet. And he who, comparing Speusippus and Xenocrates[61] with Plato, judges Xenocrates more like Plato than Speusippus, certainly knows the nature of Plato. In the same way, whenever we correct-

60 Alcibiades, son of Cleinias, was born at Athens about 450 B. C. He was noted throughout his life for his extraordinary personal beauty (and accompanying vanity). In spite of the efforts of Socrates to win over his considerable mental powers to more serious pursuits, Alcibiades became notorious in his later years for his amours and debaucheries.

61 Speusippus was the distinguished nephew and disciple of Plato. In his developed philosophy he departed from Plato in many respects, particularly in denying that the ultimate principle is the Good, and in his attempts to apply the Pythagorean doctrine of numbers to Platonic thought, and particularly to the idea of the One. Xenocrates was a disciple of Plato, born about 400 B. C. His philosophical tenets were Platonic, but he too used the language of the Pythagoreans in his teaching. The comparison discussed here is probably not one of personal appearance, but of philosophical theory; Ficino is using the word *figura* in its rhetorical sense.

ly judge one of a number of goods better than the rest, and think that because of a greater or lesser participation in the good one is better or worse than another, we must necessarily have some idea of Goodness.[62] In like manner, since from several diverse opinions of philosophers, [or even of laymen,][63] we often judge very well which is the truest and most probable, there must be in us a conception of Truth, or we would not know which ideas are more like it. Wherefore some men in adolescence, some even without a teacher, and many from the barest essentials of learning taught them by their instructors, are said to have become most learned men. This never could have happened, as we said, without a great deal of help from nature. This, Socrates abundantly showed the boys Phaedo, Theaetetus, and Meno, and he taught them that boys could answer correctly in each art if anyone asked them intelligently, since they were endowed by nature with the principles of all the arts and sciences.

The Light of Truth in the Soul.
Chapter XIII

But how concepts of this sort happen to be in the soul, seems to be uncertain in Plato. If a man judges by those books which the younger Plato wrote, *The Phaedrus, Meno,* and *Phaedo,*[64] he will think perhaps that these concepts are firmly imprinted in the substance of the mind from the beginning, like frescoes on a wall. This has been mentioned several times in the preceding paragraphs, by both you and me, for this is what he seems to mean there. But in the sixth book of the *Republic,*[65] the divine philosopher lays open the whole thing and says that the light of the mind for understanding everything is the same God Himself by whom everything was created, and he compares God and the sun with each other in that God stands in the same relation to Minds as the sun to eyes. The sun generates eyes and it bestows upon them the power to see. This power would be in vain, and would be overwhelmed by eternal darkness if the light of the sun were not present, imprinted with the colors and shapes of bodies. In this light the eye sees the colors and shapes of bodies, nor does the eye see anything else but light; it seems to see various things, however, because the light pouring into it is decorated with various forms of external bodies. The

62 This is, as Hasse (*op. cit.*, p. 245, note 53) points out, a reiteration of the Platonic doctrine of "participation." Ficino's whole aesthetic theory is an exalted form of this "absolute standard" means of arriving at an aesthetic judgment. This fact does not at first appear, because the standard set is so exalted and infinite that it escapes the bounds of what we would call absolute or fixed. The criterion for the objective judgment is so complex and lofty that the judgment is impossible of analysis, and hence seems to be subjective.

63 The bracketed passage is not in the Italian.

64 According to modern scholarship, the so-called "Socratic" dialogues were the earliest. For a discussion of the chronology of Plato's dialogues, see Shorey, *What Plato Said,* pp. 58 ff.

65 *Republic,* VI, 508.

eye sees this light reflected in the bodies, but cannot comprehend the light itself in its own source.

In the same way, God creates the soul and to it gives mind, the power of understanding. The mind would be empty and dark if it did not have the light of God, in which to see the principles of everything; whence, through the light of God, it understands, and it knows only this light, although it seems to recognize different things because it recognizes the light itself under different ideas and concepts of things. When anyone sees a man with his eyes, he creates the image of the man in fancy, and revolves it for a long time in judging it: through this exercise of the soul, he raises the eye of his mind to perception of the concept of Man, which is in the divine light. Thence suddenly a spark flashes out in his mind, and the nature itself of Man is actually understood, and so in the same way with everything else.

Thus, we understand everything through the light of God, but the pure light itself and its source, we cannot see in this life. Clearly the whole richness of the soul consists in this, that in its inner recesses glows that eternal light of God, filled with the concepts and Ideas of all things. To this light the soul can turn whenever it wishes through purity of life and the greatest steadfastness of purpose, and once it is turned, it shines with the light of the Ideas.[66]

Whence Comes Love for Men, and Whence That for Women.
Chapter XIV

According to Plato, the soul is as pregnant as the body, and they are both aroused to procreation by the stimuli of love. But some men, either on account of their nature or their training, are better equipped for offspring of the soul than for those of the body. Others, and certainly the majority of them, are the opposite. The former pursue heavenly love, the latter earthly. The former, therefore, naturally love men more than women and those nearly adults rather than children, because the first two are much stronger in mental keenness, and this because of its higher beauty is most essential to knowledge, which they naturally wish to generate. But the others are just the opposite, because of their passion for the physical union of love, and the sensuous effect of bodily generation. But, since that genital force of the soul has no power of cognition, it makes no discrimination between the sexes; but is, naturally, aroused for generation whenever we see any beautiful object, and it consequently happens that those who associate with males have intercourse with them in order to satisfy the urge of their genital parts.

This is especially frequent in people for whom Venus was in the masculine sign and in conjunction, or in termination or opposition, with Saturn.

66 With the subject of this chapter, cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* V, 3, 12; V, 5, 7; Plato's *Epistles,* VII, 342; and Ficino, *Theol. Plat.,* XII, 1 (Hasse, p. 245, note 55).

[It is not pleasant to do,][67] but we ought to have noticed that erections of the genital parts do not naturally bring about this ejaculation in vain, but for the purpose of fertilization and procreation, and the carrying of that part from the male to the female. We think that by some error of this sort that wicked crime arose which Plato in *The Laws* most severely condemns as a form of homicide.[68] Certainly he is no less to be censored as a homicide who snatches from life a man about to be born than one who carries him out of of mid-life when he has been born; very bold indeed is he who interrupts present life, but more cruel still is he who begrudges the light to the infant about to be born and denies life to his still unborn children.

The Soul is above the Body, the Angelic Mind above the Soul, and God above the Angelic Mind.

Chapter XV

But thus far we have discussed the twin richness of the soul and its two loves. Next let us investigate through what levels Diotima raised Socrates, from the lowest to the highest: from the body to the soul, from the Soul to the Angelic Mind, and from the Angelic Mind, back to God. The fact that these four levels exist in nature may be proved as follows:

Every body is moved by something else, but no body is able to move of its own accord, since it is not able to do anything through itself. But because of the presence of the soul the body seems to be moved by itself, and because of the soul, to live. And, indeed, when the soul is present the body does move itself in a sense, but when the soul is absent, it is moved only by something else, because it does not possess this faculty of moving of itself. But the soul properly possesses the power of moving itself, for to whatever it is present, it imparts the power to move itself, but what its presence itself imparts to others, it ought to possess much more itself. The soul, therefore, is above bodies, because it can move itself, in its own essence, and ought therefore certainly to be above bodies, which get their power of motion, not from themselves, but from the presence of something else. When we say that the soul moves through itself, we do not use the expression in its corporeal sense, so to speak, as Aristotle interpreted it in Plato,[69] but in its spiritual sense [in an absolute rather than a relative sense],[70] as when we state that God exists through Himself, that the sun shines through itself, and that fire heats through itself. This does not mean that one part of the soul moves the other, but that the whole moves of itself, that is, by its very nature; that is, it goes from one thing to another by reason and it performs the functions of nutrition, growth and generation through intervals of time. That temporal activity is of its very nature related to the soul, because the

67 In the Italian only.

68 Cf. *Laws*, I, 636C, VIII, 836B ff., 838E, 841D; *Rep.*, III, 403B, and *Phaedrus*, 256 (Hasse, p. 245, note 56).

69 This statement refers to Aristotle's comment (*De Anima*, I, 2) on Plato's theory of the World-Soul (*Timaeus*, 34) (Hasse, p. 245, note 57).

70 The bracketed passage is in the Italian only.

soul understands what is above itself, not one thing at one moment, and another at another, but everything at once, in one point of eternity. Wherefore, prime motion and the first interval of time are rightly attributed by Plato to the soul, whence both time and motion go across into bodies.

But before motion there must be rest; therefore, since rest is more perfect than motion, we ought to find some stable intelligence above the movable motion of the soul, which would be intelligence based on its whole self always, and intelligence always in full actuality. For the soul does not understand with its whole self and continuously, but only with a certain part of itself, and at certain times; nor does it have a definite, but an uncertain power of understanding. Therefore, just as what is more perfect precedes that which is more imperfect, above the mind of a soul which is movable, which is only a part, which is intermittent and doubtful, there must be placed the whole stable Angelic Mind, continuous and very certain, so that in the same way in which the body moved by another is preceded by the soul moved through itself, so the soul moved through itself is preceded by the Mind stable through itself. And just as the body is able to move itself only through the soul, and therefore not all bodies, but only those with souls seem to move of their own accord, so through this Mind the soul is always able to understand. For if there were intellect in the soul, of its own nature, the intellect would belong to all the souls of the beasts, exactly like the power of self-moving. The intellect, therefore, does not belong to the soul through itself, and primarily; wherefore, that ought to precede the soul, which is possessed of mind through itself, and primarily. Therefore, the Angelic Mind must be above the soul.

But the Angelic Mind is preceded by that first of all things, the highest Good, which Plato calls, in the *Parmenides*, the One Itself. Certainly, the One Itself, being simple, ought by nature to be above all the multiplicity of composite things, for from one is produced number and from simple things, a whole composition. Although the Angelic Mind may be immobile, nevertheless it is not the one, pure and simple, for the Mind understands itself. These seem to be three different things: what understands, what is understood, and understanding itself. For the Mind's reason is one thing, insofar as it understands; another insofar as it is understood; likewise another insofar as it is understanding.[71] Moreover, it has the potentiality of learning, a capacity which before the act of cognition is in itself completely unformed; in the act of cognition it is given form. This power, in understanding, desires and grasps the light of truth, which it seems to have lacked before it had understanding. It has also in itself the multitude of all the ideas.

You see how great and how varied are the multiplicity and composition in the Angelic Mind. And so we are compelled to place that which is a pure and simple unity before the Angelic Mind. But before the one God Himself we cannot place anything, because true Unity does not in the least par-

71 Ficino follows Plotinus here (*Enn.* VI, 9) (Hasse, p. 245, note 61).

ticipate in multiplicity or composition. If this One had anything above it, from that it would come; wherefore, descending from it, in the very act of descending, the One would necessarily degenerate from the thing above it, as every effect does from its cause. Therefore it would not be a unity and simple, but compounded from at least two things, that is, from the gift of its own cause, and from its own defection. So the One Itself, as Plato claims, and as Dionysius the Areopagite confirms, is above everything and the One Itself is judged by both to be the most excellent name of God. His sublimity is also proved by this fact, that the gift of a most eminent cause ought to be most broad, and through the presence of its virtue to extend itself to everything. The gift of the One Itself extends to everything. For not only is mind one, and every soul and every body one, but also formless matter itself, the formlessness of things, is said in a certain sense to be a unity. For we speak of one silence, one darkness, and one death; but the rewards of the Mind and the Soul are not extended to pure formlessness, i.e., Matter, for the Mind bestows beautiful form and order, the Soul bestows life and activity, but the formless and prime matter of the world, the formlessness of things, lacks both form and life, so the One Itself precedes the Mind and Soul, since its gift is spread more widely [than theirs]. For the same reason, Mind seems to surpass soul, because life, the gift of the soul, is not given to all bodies, but to all of them Mind does attribute form and order.[72]

What the Comparison is between God, the Angelic Mind, the Soul, and the Body.

Chapter XVI

Therefore, we ascend from the Body to the Soul, from this to the Angelic Mind, and from this to God. God is above eternity, the Angelic Mind is wholly in eternity. Clearly its operation, like its essence, remains stable. Stability, moreover, is the peculiar property of eternity.

The Soul is partly in eternity, and partly in time, for its substance always remains the same, untouched by any change of increase or decrease; but its operation, as we showed a little while ago, runs through intervals of time.

The Body is completely subject to time. For its substance is changed, and its every operation requires the passage of time.

Therefore the One Itself exists above rest or motion; the Angelic Mind is at rest; the Soul equally at rest and in motion; and the Body is placed in motion alone.

Again, the One alone remains above number, motion, and space. The Angelic Mind is in number, but above motion and space; the Soul is in number and motion, but above space; the Body is subject to number, motion, and space. The One Itself has neither number or any composition of parts and is not changed in any way from what it is, nor is it restricted to any space. The Angelic Mind has indeed a number of parts or forms, but it is free from motion and space. The Soul has a multitude of parts and feelings and is altered by the process of reasoning and by a variety of emotional disturbances but is exempt from the limits of space. But the Body is subject to all these.

72 This chapter repeats the contents of the first book of Ficino's own *Theologia Platonica* (Hasse, p. 246, note 63).

What the Comparison is between the Beauties of God, of the Angelic Mind, of the Soul, and of the Body.

Chapter XVII

The same comparison which exists among these four exists among their respective beauties. Certainly, the beauty of the Body consists in the composition of its many parts; it is bound by space, and moves along in time. The beauty of the Soul suffers the changes of time, of course, and contains a multitude of parts, but is free from the limits of space. The beauty of the Angelic Mind, on the other hand, has number alone; it is immune to the other two [space and time]. But the beauty of God suffers none of these limitations.

You see the beauty of the Body. Do you wish to see also the beauty of the Soul? Subtract the weight of the matter itself from the bodily form and the limits of space; leave the rest; now you have the beauty of the Soul. Do you wish to see the beauty of the Angelic Mind? Take away now, please, not only the spacial limit of place, but also the sequence of time; keep the multiple composition, and you will find there the beauty of the Angelic Mind. Do you wish still to see the beauty of God? Take away, in addition to those above, that multiple composition of forms, leave the simple form, and there you will have found the beauty of God.

But what shall I have left after subtracting those qualities? Do you think beauty is anything else but light? Certainly the beauty of all bodies is that light of the sun which you see, adulterated with these three: multiplicity of form (for you see it imprinted with many shapes and colors), the spaciality of place, and change of time. Take away its place in matter so that it keeps the other two besides space; of this nature is the beauty of the soul. Take from it the change of time, if you please, and give it the rest; the light remains most bright without place or motion, but engraven in all the concepts of everything. That is the Angelic Mind, and its beauty. Finally, take away that number of different ideas; leave one simple and clear light, the image of that light, which remains in the very globe of the sun and is not dispersed through the air; now you comprehend in a measure the beauty of God, which certainly excels the rest of the beauties as much as the true light of the sun in itself, pure, single, and inviolate, surpasses the splendor of the sun, which is split up, divided, adulterated, and obscured through the cloudy air.

And so the source of all beauty and love is God, and the light of the sun in the water is as a shadow compared with its brighter light in the air. The glow in the air, likewise, is as a shadow compared with its glow in fire. The glow in fire is as a shadow compared with the light of the sun, glowing in the very sun itself.

There is the same comparison among those four beauties of Body, Soul, Angelic Mind, and God. God is never so deceived as to love the shadow of his own beauty in the Angelic Mind, and to neglect his own true beauty. Nor is the Angelic Mind so taken by the beauty of the Soul, which is the shadow of itself, that it should desert its own beauty, seduced by its shadow. But our soul (and this is greatly to be lamented, since it is the cause of all our woe), the soul, I say, alone, is so carried away by the charms of bodily beauty that it puts aside its own beauty and worships the beauty of the body, which is its shadow, completely forgetting its own beauty. Hence it is that we read in Orpheus of the cruel fate of Narcissus.[73] Hence the fateful misfortune of man in general. A certain young man, Narcissus, that is, the soul of bold and inexperienced man, does not see his own countenance, he never notices his own substance and virtue, but pursues its reflection in the water, and tries to embrace it; that is, the soul admires the beauty in the weak body, an image in the flowing water, which is but the reflection of itself. It deserts its own beauty and never catches its shadow, since the soul neglects itself in worshipping the body, and is never satisfied by enjoyment of the body. For it does not really seek the body itself, but only its own beauty, [and is] seduced by bodily beauty, which is the image of its own beauty. In this way Narcissus desires, and since he pays no heed to that [true beauty] while he desires and pursues something else, he cannot satisfy his desire. Therefore he is destroyed, melted into tears; that is, the soul, so placed outside itself, and having fallen into the body, is racked by terrible disturbances, or infected by the diseases of the body, and dies, so to speak, since it already seems to be more body than soul. So that Socrates might avoid this death, Diotima led him from Body to Soul, from that to the Angelic Mind, and from that back to God.

How the Soul is Raised from Bodily Beauty to the Beauty of God.
Chapter XVIII

Now, dear fellow-guests, imagine Diotima addressing Socrates thus. "No body is beautiful in all parts, O Socrates." For it is either beautiful in one part and ugly in another, or beautiful today and ugly tomorrow, or is judged beautiful by one person and ugly by another. Therefore the beauty of the body, polluted by the contagion of ugliness, cannot be pure, true, and prime beauty; of course, no one suspects beauty of being ugly anywhere, any more than he suspects wisdom of being foolish. But we one time think

73 There is no account of the story of Narcissus in modern texts of the *Orphica*. There is an account in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, iii, 341 ff.

the appearance of a body is handsome and another time think it ugly, and, various people may think differently about it at the same moment. Therefore the prime and true beauty is not in bodies. Consider also the fact that many bodies are called by the same name, Beauty. Therefore, there must be in many bodies one common nature of beauty through which they are alike called beautiful. But consider that this one nature, as it is in another, that is, matter, must also be dependent from another, for certainly what is not able to support itself is much less able to depend from itself. It will not depend from matter, will it? Never. For nothing ugly and imperfect is able to beautify and perfect itself. But that which is one ought to spring from one; therefore, the one beauty of many bodies depends from some one incorporeal maker. The one artificer of everything is God, who continually renders all worldly matter beautiful through the Angelic Mind and the Souls. Therefore, we ought to expect to find that true concept of beauty in God and in his assistants, rather than in an earthly body. To this, I think, you will easily ascend again, dear Socrates, by these steps. If nature had given you the eyes of a lynx, dear Socrates, so that you might penetrate with your sight to the inside of anything which came in your way, that outwardly most handsome body of your Alcibiades would seem most ugly. How much of him do you love, my friend? His surface appearance only; nay, rather his color wins you; nay, a certain reflection of lights, and a most insignificant shadow. Or else vain imagination deceives you; you love what you dream rather than what you see.

Now, lest I seem to oppose you in earnest, let us say that Alcibiades certainly is handsome. But in what part handsome? In all his parts except his pug-nose, and his eyebrows, which are higher than they ought to be. Nevertheless, these are beautiful in Phaedrus; but in him the thickness of his legs is not pleasing. These are charming in Charmides, unless perhaps his thin neck might displease you. So, if you observe men individually, you will praise none of them in every detail. Whatever is right anywhere you will gather together and you will make up a whole figure in your mind from the observation of all [the details], so that the absolute beauty of the human species, which is found here and there in many bodies, will be gathered together in your soul in the conception of one image. You value little the beauty of each man, dear Socrates, if you compare it with your Idea. You possess that (Idea), not thanks to the bodies, but thanks to your own soul. So love that image which your soul created and that soul itself, its creator, rather than that crippled and scattered exterior.

But what do I bid you love in the soul?—the beauty of the soul. The beauty of bodies is a visible light, the beauty of the soul is an invisible light;[74] the light of the soul is truth. This alone is what your friend Plato seems to ask of God in his prayers. "Grant," he says, "O God, that my soul may be beautiful and that those things which pertain to my body may not impair the beauty of my soul, and that I may think only the wise man

74 The Italian reads *luce visibile* and *invisibile luce*.

rich."[75] In this Plato declares that the beauty of the soul consists in truth and wisdom; and that this is given men by God. One and the same Truth given to us all by God, acquires the names of various virtues according to its various powers. According as it shows divine things, it is called Wisdom, which Plato asked of God above all else. According as it shows natural things, it is called Knowledge; as human things, Prudence; as it makes men equal, Justice; as it makes them unconquered, Courage; and as tranquil, Temperance.

Hence, two kinds of virtues are delineated: moral virtues, so to speak, and intellectual virtues, prior to them. The intellectual virtues are: Wisdom, Knowledge, and Prudence; the moral virtues: Justice, Courage, and Temperance. The moral virtues, because of their functions and public applications, are better known. The intellectual virtues, because of their recondite truth, are more esoteric. But he who is brought up with noble breeding, because he is purer than others, is easily raised to the intellectual virtues. Therefore I bid you consider the beauty of the soul, which consists in moral virtues, to be the first beauty, so that you may understand that there is one principle of all moral virtues, through which men are called alike, noble. That is, there is one truth of the pure life, which, through exercise of Justice, Courage, and Temperance, leads us to true happiness. Therefore, esteem as highest this one truth of moral virtue and the beautiful light of the soul. Know also that you will rise immediately above moral virtue to the clear truth of wisdom, knowledge, and prudence, if you will consider these to be conceded to the soul brought up in the best virtues, and that in them is the best rule of a moral life; but however varied are the doctrines of wisdom, knowledge, and prudence you see, nevertheless, remember that there is one single light of truth in them all, through which all alike are called beautiful. I charge you to love this supremely as the supreme beauty of the soul. But this one truth in the numerous doctrines, first of all, cannot be the supreme truth, since it is in another (being distributed in many doctrines). Whatever lies in another certainly depends upon another. But one truth is never born from a multitude of doctrines, for what is one ought to rise from one. Therefore there must be one wisdom above the soul of man, which is not divided among many diverse doctrines, but is one Wisdom from whose single truth the multiform truth of man springs.

O Socrates, remember that that single light of the single truth is the beauty of the Angelic Mind, which you must worship above the beauty of the soul. This, as we have shown in the foregoing discussion, excels the beauty of bodies, because it is neither limited to space nor divided according to the parts of matter, nor is it corrupted. It excels the beauty of the soul because it is fundamentally eternal and is not disturbed by the passage of time, but since the light of the Angelic Mind shines in the series of innumerable ideas, and it is fitting that there be a unity above all the multitude of everything, a unity which is the origin of all number; this light necessarily flows from one single principle of everything, which we call the One Itself.

75 Cf. *Phaedo*, 66A-67D.

So the simple light of the One Itself in everything is infinite beauty, because it is neither soiled by the stains of matter, like the beauty of the body, nor, like the form of the soul is it changed by the passage of time, nor, like the beauty of the Angelic Mind, is it spent in vast number; and every quality separate from extraneous additions is called infinite by the natural philosophers. If there is heat in itself, not limited by cold and moisture and not weighted down with the weight of matter, the heat is called infinite, because its force is free and is not limited by any additional restrictions. Similarly, the light from every body is free and infinite, for it shines without measure or limit, because it shines of its own nature and is limited very little by the body. So the light and beauty of God, which is pure, freed from all other things, is called, without the slightest question, infinite beauty. But infinite beauty demands a vast love also. Wherefore, I ask you, Socrates, to esteem other things with a definite limit and restriction; but you must worship God truly with infinite love, and let there be no limit to divine love.

How God is to be Loved.
Chapter XIX

This, [we have supposed,][76] is what Diotima said to Socrates. But, my virtuous friend, we shall not only love God without limit as Diotima is depicted as commanding, but God alone. For as the eyes are to the sun, so the mind is to God. But the eye seeks not only light before other things, but the light alone. If we love bodies, the Soul, or the Angelic Mind, we do not really love these, but God in them: the shadow of God in bodies, the likeness of God in the Soul, and the Image of God in the Angelic Mind. So in the present we shall love God in everything, so that in the future we may love everything in God, for so we set out from there as living beings to see God and everything in Him, and whoever in the present will devote himself with love completely to God, will finally recover himself in God. Certainly he will return to his own Idea through which he was created. There, if anything is lacking, it will be supplied again; he will cling forever to the Idea of himself. [I see that you realize that].[77] True man and the Idea of man are one and the same; therefore each of us separated from God on earth is not a true man since he is separated from the Form and Idea of himself. To this Idea divine love and piety will lead us, although we are here divided and mutilated. Joined then, by love, to our own Idea, we shall become whole men, so that we shall seem first to have worshipped God in things, in order later to worship things in God; and shall seem to worship things in God in order to recover ourselves above all, and seem, in loving God, to have loved ourselves.

76 In the Italian only.
77 In the Italian only.

SEVENTH SPEECH

Conclusion of the Previous Speeches and the Opinion of Guido Cavalcanti, the Philosopher.

Chapter I

After this, Christoforo Marsuppini, most noble gentleman, who was to take the part of Alcibiades, turned to me with these words, "I congratulate especially, Marsilio, the family of your Giovanni [Cavalcanti] which has brought forth, among many men of nobility famous both in learning and deeds, the philosopher Guido,[1] deserving well of the state and surpassing everyone else in his age in subtlety of dialectic, who, having imitated this Socratic love, as much in deed as in word, has discussed briefly in verse everything you have said.

For Phaedrus described the origin of Love as an emanation from the viscera of Chaos. Pausanias divided the already twin-born Love into two kinds, Heavenly and Earthly. Eryximachus explained Love's scope when he showed that the two kinds of love are found in everything. Aristophanes explained what the presence of this so inclusive God does in everything, showing that through Him men who were formerly split are made whole again. Agathon discussed the greatness of Love's virtue and power, when he maintained that by Him alone man becomes blessed. Finally, Socrates, taught by Diotima, explained briefly what Love is, and of what nature, whence He rises, how many parts He has, to what end He is directed and of what He is capable.

Guido Cavalcanti, the philosopher, seems to have woven all of these most skillfully into his verse. In the same way in which a mirror, struck in some way by the light of the sun, shines back and, by that reflection of the glow, sets on fire [a piece of] wool placed next to it, so he thinks that that part of the soul which they call the dark fancy and the memory, like a mirror, is struck by an image of Beauty itself (instead of one of the sun), as though by some beam taken in through the eyes, so that the soul makes for itself from that [image] another, the reflection as it were of the first. By this, exactly as in the wool, the force of desire is kindled and the soul loves. He adds that this first love, kindled in the sensual desires, is created from the form of a body seen through the eyes, but that this form itself is impressed on the fancy not in the mode in which the form exists in the matter of its body, but without its matter; and yet in such a way that it is

1 Guida Cavalcanti, contemporary of Boccaccio, and "the first friend and closest rival" of Dante, was the son of the Cavalcanti mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*, X. The reference above is to his famous ode, *Donna mia priega*, in which he discusses briefly the problems of Love's origin, development, symptoms, effects, etc. Cf. Fletcher's translation in the appendix of his *Literature of the Italian Renaissance*, reprinted here in appendix B, with the kind permission of Dr. Fletcher and the Macmillan Co., his publisher.

the image of a certain definite man placed in a designated time and place. Then suddenly there is reflected in the mind another appearance of this image; it is no longer a likeness of one certain human body, as it was in the fancy; but it is, in reality, the common definition and concept of the whole human race.

So, just as from the image of fancy, taken from the body, sensuous love arises in the desire of sense, the slave of the body, so from this common definition and concept of the Mind, most remote from body, another love is born in the will, completely foreign to bodily association. Guido locates the former love in voluptuousness, the latter in contemplation. He thinks that the former revolves around the particular beauty of one body, the latter around the universal beauty of all mankind. These loves struggle with each other in man: the former banishes him down to the animal and voluptuous life; the latter raises him on high to the angelic and contemplative life. The latter is free from disturbance and is found in only a few people; the former is full of passions, and is in many people.

[In this way Guido explained the problem quite copiously in a few words by interpreting the passions of someone else. But since he explains most clearly the same things which you have already discussed in the preceding speeches, I have thought there was no need to review it for the present. Let it suffice to know that][2] this philosopher included in the creation of love some formless Chaos, as you posited above, when he said that the dark fancy is lighted, and that from the mixture of that darkness and this light love has its origin. [Moreover, who cannot see in his words that twin love, the heavenly and the earthly?][3] The first origin of the former he places in the beauty of the divine; that of the latter he places in the beauty of bodies. For by "sun" he means the light of God, and by "the beams" he means the form of bodies. Finally, he thinks that the end of Love corresponds to His beginning, so that the instinct to love arouses some to the beauty of the body, and others to the beauty of God.

Socrates was the true Lover and was like Cupid.

Chapter II

Thus far we have talked about Love. Let us come to Alcibiades and Socrates. After the guests had sufficiently praised the God of lovers, it remained, naturally, for them to praise the true worshipers of this God. It was unanimously agreed that Socrates had loved most truly of all lovers. Since throughout his life he had served openly in the camps of Cupid[4] with no deceit whatever, he had never been censured by anyone as having loved anyone less than honorably. The severity of his own life and his frequent

2 The bracketed passage is missing from the Italian text.
3 The bracketed passage is missing from the Italian text.
4 The Italian reads, "had followed the battle car of Cupid." In stretching the meaning to fit the argument, this whole discussion reads a great deal into Cavalcanti's poem which is not there.

exposure of the vices of others had made many great men bitter against him, as is usual with those who do not keep the truth to themselves.[5] Anytus, Meletus, and Lyco[6] especially, the most powerful politicians in the state, and Thrasymachus, Polus, and Callias,[7] the orators. Among the poets Aristophanes,[8] the comic poet, especially, was a most bitter critic. But none of these politicians, in the accusation by which they brought Socrates to trial, accused him of dishonorable loves;[9] nor did those orator enemies of his cast up any such thing against him; nor did even Aristophanes, the comic poet, ever mention such a thing, although he ridiculed Socrates for many other things in his comedies. Now, do you think that Socrates would have escaped the venomous tongues of so many and such great critics as these if he had polluted himself with so sordid a stain; nay, rather, if he had not been completely removed from any suspicion of this kind of crime?

Have you not noticed, gentlemen, in what has already been said, that in describing Love Himself, Plato pictures the whole image of Socrates himself, and that he describes the appearance of that divinity from the appearance of Socrates as though true love and Socrates were exactly alike, and that therefore Socrates is the truest and most genuine lover of all?

Come now, and recall to mind the picture of love. You will see pictured in it Socrates. Put the figure of Socrates before your eyes. You will see him thin, dry, and squalid. He was a man undoubtedly melancholy by nature, and rough, thin from fasting, badly groomed from carelessness, and besides this, nude, that is, clothed in a plain old mantle; and walking along barefooted. Thus Socrates was always accustomed to walk, says Phaedrus in Plato.[10] He was "humble and flying down through the depths." Socrates' gaze was always focused on the ground, as Phaedo says. He frequented the worst places, for he used to be seen either in the shops of Simon, the tanner, or in the workshops of stone-cutters. He used rustic and unlettered diction, which Callicles casts up to him in the *Gorgias*.[11] And he was so gentle that

5 This expansion of the Latin is based on the Italian, "si come suole colui che non tace il vero."

6 The three principal accusers of Socrates, in the trial which led to his death. Anytus was the most influential and formidable of the three, but he was forced to go into exile to escape the vengeance of the populace after the execution of Socrates. Meletus was stoned to death and Lyco banished for their parts in the proceedings.

7 Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, a contemporary of Lysias, was a sophist and rhetorician. He is one of the speakers in the Republic. Polus of Agrigentum was a sophist and student of Gorgias. Callias was a wealthy Athenian at whose house the *Protagoras* takes place. He is also mentioned in Xenophon's *Symposium*.

8 Aristophanes' ridicule of Socrates in *The Clouds* (423 B. C.) is too well known to demand explanation. It need only be noted that the comedy satirizes Socrates almost entirely on intellectual, not personal, grounds.

9 The Italian translation is a good deal broader and may be translated as follows: "But although these politicians, in bringing Socrates to trial, were most severe in their criticism and accused him with false testimony of many vices of which he was innocent, none of them accused him of having loved less than honorably."

10 *Phaedrus*, 229A.

11 *Gorgias*, 494.

though he suffered much malediction and was sometimes beaten [unjustly], nevertheless he is said never to have been disturbed in soul.

"Homeless." Socrates was asked from what country he came: "I am a citizen of the world," he said, "for there is my father-land where the good is";[12] but he had neither a house of his own, nor a soft bed, nor good food, nor expensive furniture. "Sleeping on doorsteps on the street beneath the sky." This means in the case of our Socrates that his heart was unconcealed and lay open to all, moreover that he took delight in both sight and hearing, which are the doors of the soul, that he walked confidently and fearlessly, and lay down [to sleep] anywhere if it seemed necessary, wrapped in his mantle.

"Always poor." Who does not know that Socrates was the son of a stone-cutter and a midwife, and that even up to his old age he made his living by his own hands in sculpturing stone, and that he never had enough to feed himself and his family? The poverty of his mind he avowed everywhere. He was always inquiring, saying that he knew nothing. "Manly," for he was of a constant heart and of invincible conviction; he spurned with his great soul even Archelaus the Macedonian and Scopus the Cranonian and Eurylochus of Larissa[13] when he refused to accept the money they sent him, and would not go to visit them.

"Bold and courageous." How great was his courage in military affairs Alcibiades explains most copiously in the *Symposium*.[14] Socrates is said to have conceded to Alcibiades the victory at Potidea which he himself won. "Lively." He was, as Zopyrus the Physiognomist[15] has rightly judged, most excitable. In fact, during a conversation he was wont to throw out his hands and pull at his beard in the vehemence of his speech. "Eloquent." He had ready a host of perfectly equal arguments on either side when he was examining a question. Though he used perhaps unpolished language, as Alcibiades says in the *Symposium*, yet he always moved the souls of his audience more than Themistocles, Pericles, and all the rest of the orators. "He sets traps for the Beautiful and the Good." Alcibiades says that Socrates (overcome by his own love) always strove to catch for himself those who seemed endowed with noble natures, and trapped them with his reasonings and led them to the study of philosophy.[16]

"An experienced and clever hunter." That Socrates was accustomed to hunt for the divine countenance in bodily form has been sufficiently well

12 The same idea, in different forms, has been attributed to Antisthenes and Diogenes, as well as to Socrates (Hasse, p. 247, note 7).

13 The last two men were members of the embassy sent by King Archelaus of Macedonia to induce Socrates to visit the Macedonian court, but Socrates would have nothing to do with them, though Euripides, Agathon, and other distinguished Athenians were guests of Archelaus. (Aristotle, *Rhet.* ii. 23. 8, cited by W. R. M. Lamb, trans., *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, Loeb edn., p. 339).

14 *Symposium*, 221B.

15 Zopyrus, the physiognomist. Cf. Cic. *Tusc. Disput.*, IV, xxxvii, 80, and *De Fato*, V, 10 (Hasse, p. 247, note 10).

16 This translation is based on the Italian.

stated in the foregoing chapters, and Plato further confirms it in the *Protagoras.*

"A trickster." In many ways, as the dialogues of Plato show, he refuted the sophists, encouraged youths, and taught modest men. "Devoted to prudence," for he was so judicious and so perspicacious in foresight that anyone who dared to do anything against his advice was lost, as Plato tells in the *Theages.*

"A lover of wisdom all his life." In his own defense in court, he told the jurors that if they would free him from death on the condition that he would never afterwards philosophize, he would rather die than cease philosophizing.[17]

"A sorcerer, enchanter, magician, and sophist." For Alcibiades said that the words of Socrates were sweeter and moved him more than the melody of the music of Marsyas and the wonderful Musicians of Olympus.[18] Both accusers and friends testify that he had a familiar daemon. Aristophanes, the comic poet, called Socrates a sophist, as did his accusers, and rightly, since he had equal powers of supporting and refuting.

"Halfway between wisdom and ignorance." "Although all men are ignorant," said Socrates, "I differ from the rest in this much, that I am aware of my ignorance, and others are certainly not." So he was half-way between wisdom and ignorance because, although he was ignorant of facts themselves, at least he was aware of his own ignorance.

For these reasons, since Socrates seems to be the most like Love, and therefore the truest lover, Alcibiades thought Socrates should be praised after Love himself, [as the true worshipper of this God][19] so that we understand that in praising Socrates we have praised all who love in the same way. What are the praises of Socrates you have heard here, and they are perfectly clear in the words of Plato from the mouth of Alcibiades; in what way Socrates loved, anyone can understand if he remembers the teachings of Diotima. For Socrates loved exactly as Diotima taught above.

On Bestial Love, Which is a Kind of Insanity.

Chapter III

But someone may ask perhaps, "Of what benefit to mankind is this Socratic love? Why is it worthy of so great praise? What is its opposite?" I shall explain this, beginning a little deeper [in the question].

In the *Phaedrus,*[20] our Plato defines madness as a distraction of the mind. But he gives two kinds of distraction. One he thinks comes from

17 *Apology,* 29D.
18 "Marsyas" is the satyr who was flayed alive for his presumption in challenging Apollo to a musical duel. The "Olympus" is not the home of the gods, but the name of one of two mythical Greek musicians by that name, probably the one said to have been a pupil of Marsyas.
19 In the Italian only.
20 *Phaedrus,* 265A.

human weakness, and the other from divine inspiration. The former he calls insanity, the latter divine madness. By the sickness of insanity, man is cast down below the human level, and in some way turns from a man into a brute. There are two kinds of insanity: one rises from a weakness of the mind, the other from a weakness of the heart. The brain is often filled too much with dried bile, often with dried blood, and sometimes black bile; hence men sometimes become demented. Those who are troubled with dried bile are made violently angry, even when provoked by no one at all; they scream in a high tone of voice, rush upon those they meet, and strike themselves and others.

Those who suffer from dried blood break out too much into extravagant laughter; they boast more than other people, and make marvellous promises about themselves; they are transported with song and exult in the dance.

Those who are oppressed with black bile perpetually lament; they imagine dreams for themselves which they either fear in the present or dread for the future. These three kinds of insanity result from a defect of the brain.

When these humors are stopped up in the heart, they produce nervousness and anxiety, not true madness; but madness, when they oppress the brain; therefore they are said to be caused by a weakness of the brain. But we think that that insanity comes from a disease of the heart by which are affected those who love hopelessly. To these the sacred name of Love is given falsely, but lest perchance we seem too much to limit a common term, we also use that name for such people, for the sake of disposing of them.

Earthly Love is a Certain Bewitchment.

Chapter IV

But direct the attention of your ears and mind to what I say. The blood in a young man is thin, clear, warm, and sweet, for with increasing age, as the thinner parts are all spent, the blood becomes thicker and therefore darker. Certainly what is thin and light is pure and clear, and the contrary is true for the opposite. Why is it warm and sweet? Because life and the beginning of life, that is generation itself, consist in warmth and moisture, and the seed at the first birth of living things is moist and warm; their nature remains thus in boyhood and youth. In later age, little by little, it is necessarily changed into the opposite qualities of dryness and cold. Therefore the blood in a youth is thin, clear, warm, and sweet; clear because thin, warm and moist because young; and since it is warm and moist, it therefore seems sweet, for sweetness consists in the combination of warmth and moisture.

Why all this explanation? Why, that you may understand at what age the spirits are thin and clear and warm and sweet. For, since these are generated from the heat of the heart out of purer blood, they are always

in us exactly like the humor of the blood. But just as this vapor of blood,[21] which is called spirit, since it is created from the blood, is like blood, so it sends rays like itself through the eyes as though through glass windows. And as the sun, which is the heart of the universe, sends out from its orbit its light, and through its light its own strength to lower things; so the heart of our body, by its own kind of perpetual[22] motion stirring the blood nearest to it, from it pours spirits throughout the whole body, and through them sparks of light through the various single parts, but especially through the eyes. Of course the spirit flies out to the highest part of the body, since it is very light; moreover, its light shines more richly through the eyes [than through the other parts] because the eyes themselves are for seeing and are above the rest of the parts and the most transparent and clear of all the parts. The many animals whose eyes glow in the dark, and who can see at night, testify to the fact that there is some light, although small, in the eyes and brain. Moreover, if a person presses the corner of his eye in a certain way with his finger and turns it, he seems to see a certain circle of light within himself. The deified Augustus[23] is said to have had such clear and shining eyes that when he looked at someone fixedly, he forced him to lower his face, as though before the glow of the sun. Tiberius[24] also is said to have had large eyes which, and this is miraculous, could see even at night and in the dark, but only for a little while when they had first opened from sleep, and then grew dim again.

That the light sent out from the eyes draws with itself a spiritual vapor, and the vapor draws with it the blood, we perceive from the fact that bleary and blood-shot eyes, by the emission of their own light, force the eyes of someone looking closely at them to suffer a similar illness. Hence it seems that the ray stretches out to that person opposite and, along with the ray, a vapor of corrupt blood comes out, and by its contagion, the eye of the onlooker is infected. Aristotle writes[25] that women during the menstrual period often by their own gaze soil their mirrors with bloody drops. This I think, comes from this fact, that the spirit which is the sanguine vapor seems to be blood so thin, as it were, that it escapes the sight of the eyes, but made thicker on the surface of the mirror, it is seen clearly. If this falls onto some coarser material, like a piece of cloth, or wood, it is not seen because it does not remain on the surface of that thing, but penetrates it. If it falls on more dense material, but rough, like rock, or brick, and the like, it is dissipated and broken up by the roughness of that body.

But the mirror, because of its hardness, causes the spirit to stop on the surface; on account of its evenness and smoothness, it keeps it unbroken; on account of its reflection, it helps and increases the light of the

21 The Italian reads *vapore di sangue.*
22 Hasse translates, "its own peculiar kind of motion," but all the Latin texts read *perpetuo* and so does the Italian.
23 Cf. Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* c. 79.
24 Cf. Suetonius, *Tiberius,* c. 68.
25 Aristotle, *De Insomniis,* 2, 459 (Hasse, p. 248, note 16).

spirit itself; and on account of its cold, it condenses the rare mist of the spirit into droplets. For exactly the same reason, whenever we open our mouths and blow with all our strength on glass, we cover its surface with a kind of thin mist of saliva, since breath, flying out from the saliva, condensed on this material lapses back into saliva. Therefore, what wonder is it that the eye, wide open and intent upon someone, throws missiles of its own light into near-by eyes and directs also, together with these missiles which are the vehicles of spirits, the bloody vapor which we call spirit? Hence the virulent missile pierces the eyes, and since it is sent from the heart of the one striking the blow, it seeks the heart of the man struck as though [seeking] its proper place. It pierces the heart; but in the back of the heart, which is more resistant, it is condensed and turns into blood. This wandering blood, foreign, so to speak, to the nature of the wounded man, infects his own blood, and the infected blood becomes sick. Hence follows a double bewitchment. The sight of a stinking old man or of a woman suffering her period bewitches a boy, and the sight of a youth bewitches an older person, but since the humor of an older person is cold and very slow, it scarcely reaches the back of the heart in a boy, and being awkward in making the transit, it moves the young heart very little, unless the heart, because of extreme youth, is very tender.

This, therefore, is a weak bewitchment. The other is a very strong [bewitchment] through which a young man pierces the heart of an older. It is this, dear friends, about which Apuleius[26] the Platonist complains. "You are the whole[27] cause and origin," he says, "of all this present grief of mine, and also the cure itself and my only salvation. For those eyes of yours, gliding through my eyes to the depths of my heart, stir the hottest fire in my marrow. Therefore, have mercy on me, who die because of you."

Put before your eyes, I pray, Phaedrus[28] the Myrrhinusian and that Theban who was captivated by love for him, the orator Lysias. Lysias stares open-mouthed at the face of Phaedrus. Phaedrus sends into the eyes of Lysias the sparks of his own eyes, and with the sparks sends along a spirit. The light of Phaedrus is easily joined by the light of Lysias, and the spirit also easily joins his spirit. The vapor of this sort springing from the heart of Phaedrus immediately seeks the heart of Lysias. By the hardness of this heart it is made denser and returns to its former state, as the blood of Phaedrus, so that the blood of Phaedrus is now in the heart of Lysias, a truly remarkable phenomenon.

26. Apuleius, a Roman writer of the African school, born about 130 A. D., was educated at Carthage and studied philosophy at Athens. He was the author of several works, including the *Golden Ass.* In the Middle Ages he enjoyed a wide influence, and even Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* were attributed to him.
27 The Italian reads *La cagione tutta et la origine.*
28 Phaedrus, son of Pythocles of the Attic deme of Myrrhinus, appears in several of Plato's dialogues as a follower of Socrates, but there are no writings attributed to him extant. Diogenes Laertius speaks of him as one of Plato's favorites.

Hence each immediately cries out. Lysias to Phaedrus: "Phaedrus, my heart, dearest body." Phaedrus to Lysias: "O my spirit, my blood, Lysias." Phaedrus pursues Lysias because his heart seeks its own humor. Lysias pursues Phaedrus because the sanguine humor desires its proper vessel, seeks its own seat. But Lysias pursues Phaedrus more ardently, for it is easier for the heart to live without a small part of its humor than for the humor to live without its own heart. A river is more dependent upon its source than the source on the river. Therefore an iron, receiving the influence of a lodestone, is drawn toward this stone, but does not attract it, so Lysias pursues Phaedrus more than Phaedrus, Lysias.

How Easily We are Ensnared by Love.

Chapter V

But how is it possible, someone may ask, for the thin light, the very light spirit, the infinitesimal blood of Phaedrus to contaminate all of Lysias so quickly, so strongly, and so destructively? This will not seem so incredible if you consider the other diseases which attack through contagion: as in venereal itch, mange, leprosy, pneumonia, consumption, dysentery, inflammation of the eyes, and the plague. In fact the disease of love is easily caught and becomes the most serious disease of all. Certainly that spiritual vapor and blood completely infected in an older man by a younger has four qualities, as we have seen. It is clear, thin, warm, and sweet. Because it is clear, it coincides with the clarity of eyes and spirits and so pleases and delights him. Because it is thin, it quickly flies into the heart, whence it easily permeates, through the veins and arteries, the whole body. Because it is warm, it stirs vigorously, moves and strongly infects the blood of the older man, and changes it into its own nature. This Lucretius states thus:

> Hence first into your heart trickled the drops
> Of Venus' sweetness, followed by cold care.[29]

Moreover, because it is sweet, it comforts the viscera in some way, feeding and pleasing them. Hence it happens that all the blood of the man changes into the nature of the youth's blood. It seeks the body of the youth so that it may inhabit its own veins and the humor of the new blood also, and may glide into the tender young veins. It happens also that the invalid is touched by pleasure and pain at the same time: by pleasure because of the clarity and sweetness of that vapor and blood (the former pleases and the latter delights); with pain because of its thinness and warmth. The thinness divides and plucks apart the viscera; the warmth takes away from a man that which is his own and changes him into the nature of another, through which change certainly it does not permit him to rest in himself but always draws him to the person by whom he was infected. Lucretius suggests this in this way:

29 *De Rerum Natura,* IV, 1059-60.

> And the body seeks that from which the mind is wounded by love,
> For they all usually fall toward the wound, and in that direction
> From which we were struck by the blow, the blood spurts out,
> And if the enemy be close by, the red blood drenches him.[30]

In these verses Lucretius means that the blood of a man wounded by the light of the eyes, falls on the one wounding him, just as the blood of a man slain with a sword falls on his slayer. Of this phenomenon, so to speak, I shall give you an explanation, if you like.

Hector wounds Patroclus and kills him. Patroclus looks at Hector, wounding him. Since his conscience judges he must be avenged, immediately his bile is kindled to vengeance; by this his blood is enflamed, and hastens immediately to the wound, partly so that it may help that part of the body, and partly for vengeance; the spirits also, because they are light, gather at the same place. Flying as far as Hector, they migrate to him. They are preserved by the heat of Hector's body for some time, perhaps for seven hours. During that time, if Hector looks intently and closely at the wound of the corpse, the wound splatters gore toward Hector, for it is possible for blood to flow somehow toward an enemy, partly because its heat is not yet dead, nor its interior agitation quiet, partly because it has been aroused against him only a little while before, and partly because the blood seeks its own spirits, and the spirits attract their own blood. In some like way, Lucretius suggests that the blood of a man wounded by love hastens against the one who smites him, and we wholly agree with this suggestion.

On a Strange Effect of Earthly Love.

Chapter VI

Now, virtuous friends, shall I tell you what follows, or shall I rather omit it? Well, I shall speak, for the thing itself demands it, although the subject seems improper for speech. But who has ever been able to express offensive ideas in an inoffensive manner?

[Lucretius, the unfortunate lover, says that][31] the so great change of the man yearning for the nature of the youth brings it about that the youth wishes to transfer his whole body into that of the man, and to draw the man's whole body into his own, so that either the young humor may reach the young veins, or the tender veins acquire the young humor. [Hence they are led to do many wicked things between themselves.][32] For since the seminal fluid flows down from the whole body, the lovers think (according to Lucretius) that by ejaculation or reception of it alone, they can give up their whole body to each other and receive a whole body in return. [Lucre-

30 *De Rerum Natura,* IV, 1047-51.
31 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.
32 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

tius, the Epicurean philosopher, the most unhappy of all lovers, had a presentiment of this very thing:

> Thus therefore, he who has suffered a blow from Venus' shafts
> If a boy strikes this blow, with female parts,
> Or if a woman, he tries, casting love from his whole body,
> To have physical union with that person whence he was struck,
> And to cast the seminal fluid from body into body.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> They clasp bodies avidly and join the saliva of their mouths;
> They breathe with mouth close-pressed to mouth.
> But to no avail, since they are able to rub off nothing,
> Nor to penetrate and pass into each other's bodies
> With their whole bodies, for so they seem to wish,
> And to be striving to do. They are thus bound together
> In the bonds of insatiate love while their very limbs melt,
> Overcome with ecstasy.[33]

This is what Lucretius the Epicurean says.][34] That lovers also wish to take the whole loved one into themselves is illustrated by Artemisia,[35] the wife of King Mausolus of Caria. She is said to have loved her husband beyond the belief of human affection, and to have ground his dead body into dust and to have drunk it, dissolved in water.

Earthly Love is a Disturbance of the Blood.

Chapter VII

Indeed, that this passion is in the blood, we have proof in the fact that a disturbance of this kind gives no respite [to the stricken one].[36] A continuous fever is located by natural philosophers in the blood. One which leaves six hours of quiet is located in the phlegm; one day, in the humor of the bile, and two days in that of black bile. In the blood, therefore, we rightly place the fever of love; that is to say, in the melancholic blood, as you have heard in the speech of Socrates. From melancholic blood is always born fixed and profound thought.[37]

How Lovers Become like the Loved Ones.

Chapter VIII

Therefore let none of you wonder if he has heard that a lover has assumed in his own body some likeness or form of his loved one. Pregnant women often concentrate mentally on wine which they want most avidly. Their thinking moves their inner spirits and shapes in them an image of

33 Part of the difficulty of this passage is the fact that it is a composite of two quotations from the *De Rerum Natura,* IV, 1052-56 and 1108-14. The break (indicated by the dotted line) comes between lines 1056 and 1108.

34 The bracketed passage is completely omitted in the Italian.

35 Artemisia, the wife of King Mausolus of Caria, whose magnificent tomb, the Mausoleum, was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world.

36 The bracketed passage is in the Italian only.

37 This translation is based on the Italian translation.

the thing they are thinking about. Those spirits move the blood likewise, and they imprint on the soft material of the foetus the image of wine.

[But who is so stupid as not to know that][38] the lover desires his own beloved more ardently than the pregnant woman her wine. He thinks also more vigorously, and with more determination. What wonder is it then that in the lover's ardent contemplation of the beloved's countenance itself fixed in his own breast, that countenance is impressed upon his own spirit, and by the spirit upon the blood, especially when the soft blood of Phaedrus is already flowing in the veins of Lysias; [then what wonder is it] that the face of Phaedrus should be able most easily to shine in his own blood? Since, in fact, all the parts of the whole body, as they dry out continually, revive continually with the moisture taken from their food, it follows that through the days the body of a man, as it gradually becomes dry, is little by little remade. But the parts are remade from the blood flowing out of the streams of the veins. Therefore, is it any wonder that, if the blood, infected with a certain image, impresses the same image on parts, Lysias should seem at length to have become like Phaedrus in some colors, lines, feelings, or manners?

By Whom Especially We are Caught.

Chapter IX

Perhaps someone may ask by whom especially and by what means lovers are entrapped, and how they are freed. Women indeed snare men easily, but those do it most easily who assume a masculine nature; and men do it as much more easily than women as they are more like men, and they have blood and spirit that is clearer, warmer, and thinner; for of this Cupid's net consists. Among men, those attract men and women most strongly who are predominantly sanguine and somewhat choleric, and have large, blue, shining eyes, especially if they live chastely, and have not stained their bodies by exhausting their clear spirits in coitus.

For as we have shown above, these things are necessary for the arrows themselves which wound the heart to be shot out promptly. In addition to these conditions people are ensnared who were born when Venus was in Leo, or when Luna shone brightly upon Venus, and those also who are endowed with like complexions. Phlegmatic people, in whom phlegm dominates, are never caught. Melancholic people, in whom black bile dominates, are seldom caught, it is true, but once trapped, they are never released. When the sanguine temperament catches the sanguine, it is a light yoke, a pleasant bondage, for like complexion creates mutual love. Moreover, the amiability of this humor preserves faith and hope in the lovers. When a choleric person loves a choleric, the servitude is more unbearable. The likeness of complexion provides some exchange of good will between them, but that fiery humor of bile disturbs them with repeated fits of temper. When

38 Bracketed passage in the Italian only.

a sanguine person loves a choleric, or vice versa, because of a mixture of soft and sharp humors at the same time, a certain alternation of irascibility and affability results, and of pleasure and pain. When a sanguine person snares a melancholic, the perpetual knot is far from grievous, for the sweetness of the sanguine tempers the bitterness of the melancholy. But when a choleric traps a melancholic, it is the most terrible disease of all. The sharp humor [sanguine] of a youth glides everywhere throughout the inner being of older men. The flame eats the soft marrow, and the unfortunate lover burns. Choler arouses him to wrath and slaughter; melancholy, to sulking and perpetual complaint. Indeed, the end of love for these, often, is the same as it was for Phyllis, Dido, and Lucretius.[39] The phlegmatic, or melancholy youth,[40] because of the thickness of his blood and spirit, catches no one.

The Method of Trapping.

Chapter X

How lovers are charmed, it seems we have discussed enough above if we may add only the suggestion that mortals are best charmed when, in frequent gazes directing eye to eye, they join lights with lights and wretchedly drink in a long love. Really the whole cause and origin of this kind of illness, according to Musaeus,[41] is the eye. Therefore, if a man is pleasing in the shining of his eyes, although he may be less well built in his other parts, for the reason we have mentioned, he nevertheless forces to fall in love those who look at him. A man who is oppositely constructed invites to a kind of moderate good will rather than to love.

A harmony of the rest of the parts besides the eyes seems to have no power itself to cause this kind of malady, but seems only to supply the occasion for it. Certainly a handsome physique invites one looking at it from a distance to come nearer; then it detains him looking at it face to face, in the very contemplation of it for a long time; then the sight itself alone strikes him down as he loiters. But to produce that moderate love, a part of divinity, about which the discussion has centered for the greater part of this symposium, not only sight, but also the harmony and agreement of all the parts concur.

The Healing of Love.

Chapter XI

Thus far we have dealt with the questions of how and by whom we are caught. There remain to be said a few words about how we are freed. But

39 Phyllis, in Greek mythology, was betrothed to Demophoön. When he failed to come to her at the appointed time, she killed herself and was changed into an almond tree. The suicide of Dido is familiar from the fourth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*. For Lucretius, cf. p. 195, note 38, *supra*.

40 The Italian reads merely *persona*.

41 Musaeus, *Hero and Leander*, 94 ff.

the release from this disease is double, one of nature, the other of art. The natural cure is that which is brought about by a certain interval of time. This method applies not only to this, but to all diseases. Indeed, an itch in the skin remains as long as the dregs of decaying blood remain in the veins, or the salty phlegm flourishes in the parts. When the blood has been purified, or the phlegm removed, the itch ceases, and the filthy stains of the skin disappear. Nevertheless, timely evacuation contributes greatly; hasty evacuation or ointment is judged most dangerous.

The disease of lovers also necessarily lasts as long as that infection of the blood, poisoned by bewitchment, remaining in the veins, presses the heart with care. "The wound feeds on the veins,[42] and burns the parts with hidden flames; for from the heart it goes into the veins; from the veins it is transferred into the parts; and when it is finally driven away, the torment of the poor erotics (nay rather the erratics)[43] ceases."

That process requires a long time in everyone, but in melancholic persons a very long time, especially if they have been snared in the rising of Saturn. The time is most bitter as well as long, if they were enslaved in the setting of Saturn, or in his conjunction with Mars, or in his opposition to the sun. They are ill the longest at whose birth Venus was in the mansion of Saturn, or was in equal aspect with regard to Saturn and the Moon.

There must be added to this natural purgation, the care of most diligent art. One must watch out, in the first place, lest one try to tear out or cut off something which is not yet ready, or lest with the greatest danger, one hack off something which can be more safely released gently. A gradual cessation of relations must be made. One must especially be very careful not to let the light of his eyes meet those of the beloved. If there is any wickedness in the soul or body of the loved one, it ought carefully to be kept in mind. The soul should be busied with many various and serious matters; the blood should often be thinned, and clear sweet wine ought to be used, sometimes even to the point of intoxication, so that, with the old infected blood removed, the new blood and new spirit may come in. To exercise often until one perspires is important; so that through it the passages of the body may be opened for expurgation to take place. In addition, all those things which physicians prescribe for protection of the heart and nourishment of the brain are most helpful. Lucretius prescribes also frequent coitus:

> But he ought to flee from all reminders, repel
> The bait of love, and direct his mind to something else,
> To ejaculate his seminal fluid into other bodies, and
> Not withhold his seed which is disturbed in him by his love for one only.[44]

42 Vergil, *Aeneid*, IV, 2, *volnus alit venis*.

43 This translation is an attempt to reproduce Ficino's play on the terms *amantium* and *amentium*. The play is not reproduced in the Italian.

44 Lucretius, *op. cit.*, IV, 1063-66.

How Harmful Earthly Love Is.
Chapter XII

But lest we go insane talking further about insanity, let us conclude thus with these brief remarks. One kind of madness is that anxious care by which earthly lovers are vexed day and night. First in the course of their love they are kindled by bile (choler); then they are afflicted by the turning brown of the black bile, (*i.e.* by melancholy); and thence they rush into madness and raging passion, and, as though blind, do not know where they are being hurled. How dangerous this adulterous love is to loved ones as well as to lovers, Lysias the Theban, and Socrates, in Plato (in the *Phaedrus*) [and every one who has loved in this way] show. [But the worst effect from it is that][45] by this madness, man descends to the nature of a beast.

How Useful is Divine Love and The Four Kinds of Divine Madness.
Chapter XIII

[Finally, then, this is the source of the kind of madness which springs from physical disease.][46] But by divine madness, man is raised above the nature of man and passes over into God. The divine madness is a kind of illumination of the rational soul, through which God draws the soul slipping down to the lower world back to the higher.[47] The fall of the soul from the one very beginning itself of everything into bodies, is brought about through four stages, through Mind, Reason, Opinion, and Nature.[48]

For in the whole order of things, there are six grades, of which the highest is the One Itself, and the lowest is body; in the middle are the four which we have mentioned. It is necessary for anything that falls from the first to the last to descend through the middle four. The One Itself is the limit and measure of everything, having no part in mixture and multiplicity. The Angelic Mind is a multitude, to be sure, of ideas, but [it is] stable and eternal. The Reason of the Soul is an unstable but orderly multitude of notions and arguments. Opinion, however, which is beneath reason, is an unstable and unordered multitude of images, but is a unity in one substance and in one point, since the Soul itself, in which opinion exists, is one substance occupying no space. It is the same with Nature, that is, the nutritive force from the soul, and the vital complexion except that it is diffused throughout the points of the body. Body, however, is an undeter-

45 Bracketed clauses are in the Italian only.
46 In the Italian only.
47 Ficino is thinking here in terms of the Neoplatonic idea of the descent and ascent of the soul, from and to the All-Soul.
48 The steps of learning are in Plato: 1) δόξα, opinion; 2) διάνοια, thought, in the sense of the process of reasoning; and 3) νόησις, pure intelligence. For Plotinus these were the steps leading to "knowledge" of the highest Good. The "nature" refers to the stage in which the soul is in an earthly body (cf. Hasse, p. 250, note 34).

mined multitude of parts and circumstances subject to motion and divided into substance, points, and moments. All these our Soul looks back upon; through these it descended and through these it ascends. For, since it is produced from the One Itself, which is the source of everything, it has obtained a certain unity which unites its whole being and its powers and functions, from which and to which other parts of the soul are related, like the lines from the center and to the center of a circle. However, it unites not only the parts of the soul together and with the whole soul, but also the whole soul to the One Itself, the cause of everything.

Moreover, inasmuch as it is illumined by the light of the divine Mind, the same soul contemplates through the Mind the ideas of everything in stable actuality. As it looks back upon itself, it contemplates the universal concepts of things and by reasoning proceeds from beginnings to conclusions. As it looks back upon bodies, it considers by opinion the particular forms and images of movable things received through the senses. As it is related to matter, it uses nature as an instrument by which it unites, moves, and forms matter. Whence generations, increases, and their opposites arise. You see therefore that from the One which is above eternity, the soul falls into eternal multiplicity, from eternity into time, from time into space and matter. It falls, I say, since in embracing the body too much it goes a long way from that purity in which it was born.

By what Steps the Divine Madnesses Raise the Soul.
Chapter XIV

Wherefore, just as it descends through four steps, it must necessarily ascend through four, but that madness is divine which raises the soul to the heights as stated in its definition; therefore there are four kinds of divine madness. The first is the poetic madness, the second is that of the mysteries, the third is that of prophecy, and the fourth is that of love. Moreover, the poetry is from the Muses, the mystery from Dionysus, the prophecy from Apollo, and the love from Venus.

Certainly the Soul cannot return to the One unless it itself becomes one.[49] But it was created multiple; because it has fallen into the body, it is distributed among many functions, and it looks back upon an infinite multiplicity of corporeal things. Hence its higher parts are almost asleep and its lower parts dominate the others. The former are affected by stupefaction, the latter by excitation. But the whole soul is filled with discord and dissonance; therefore the first need is for the poetic madness, which through musical tones arouses what is sleeping, through harmonic sweetness calms what is in turmoil, and finally, through the blending of different things, quells dissonant discord and tempers the various parts of the soul.

49 In his introduction to the *Ion*, Ficino explains that unity is the function of all four of the madnesses. (Cited by Shorey, *What Plato Said*, p. 545).

Nor is that enough, for multiplicity and diversity still remain in the soul. There is added therefore the mystery of Dionysus which, by expiation, sacrifices, and by every form of divine worship, directs the attention of all the parts to the Mind, by which God is worshipped. Whence, since the single parts of the soul have been reorganized into one Mind, the soul is now made a single whole out of many. But there is needed still a third madness to lead the mind back to the Unity Itself, the head of the soul. This Apollo brings about through prophecy, for when the soul rises above Mind into Unity, it sees into the future.

Finally, when the soul has been made one, one, I say, which is in itself the very nature and essence of soul, it remains that immediately it recovers itself into the One which is above essence, that is, God. This the heavenly Venus completes through Love, that is, through the desire for the divine beauty, and the passion for Good.

So the first kind of madness tempers dissonant and unharmonious parts. The second makes the tempered parts one out of many. The third makes it one above all parts; and the fourth into One which is above essence and above the whole.

In the *Phaedrus*,[50] Plato calls the Mind directed to the divine, the charioteer in the soul of man. Oneness of soul is the head of the driver. Reason and Opinion, running through natural things, are his good steed. Confused Fancy and Sense Appetite are his bad horse. The nature of the whole soul is called the wheel itself, because its own motion like that of a wheel, beginning in itself, finally returns to itself when it perceives its own nature, that is, when its contemplation, having begun from the soul, returns to the same thing. Plato attributes wings to the soul, by which it may be borne to the sublime; of these we think one is the inquiry by which the mind strives assiduously for the Truth, and the other the desire for the Good by which our will is always influenced. These parts of the soul lose their order when they are confused by the disturbing body.

So the first kind of madness separates the good horse, that is, reason and opinion, from the bad horse, from confused fancy and sense desire. The second madness subjects the bad horse to the good, and the good horse to the driver, that is, to the Mind. The third madness directs the driver to his own head, that is, to the unity which is the head of his Mind. The last madness turns the head of the driver toward the head of all things; that is, when the driver is blest and is driving his horses, that is, accommodating all parts of the soul subject to him, toward the stable, that is, toward divine beauty, and presents them with ambrosia and, even more, nectar to drink, that is, shows them the vision of beauty, and from that vision, happiness. These are the functions of the four kinds of madness. About them there is a general discussion in the *Phaedrus*, but specifically about the poetic madness in the *Ion*, and on the amatory madness in the *Symposium*. The books

50 *Phaedrus*, 246B.

of Orpheus are all testimony that he was seized by all four madnesses. We have already learned that Anacreon[51] and Socrates and Sappho were all seized with the amatory madness particularly.

Love is the Noblest of All These.

Chapter XV

Of all these, the most powerful and most noble is the amatory madness. "Most powerful," I say, because all the others necessarily depend upon it. For we achieve neither the poetic, the religious, nor the prophetic madness without a great zeal, flaming piety, and sedulous worship of the divine. But zeal, piety, and worship, what else do we call them but love? Therefore all the madnesses depend upon the power of Love. It is also most noble, since to it as to an end, the others are referred; moreover, it is this which joins us most closely with God.

Adulterous passions seem to imitate these four madnesses falsely in just as many ways: the poetic, that vulgar music which pleases only the ears; that of the mysteries, the vain superstitions of many men; the prophetic, the fallacious conjecturing of human knowledge; the amatory, the impulses of lust. True love is nothing but a certain urge striving to fly up to the divine beauty, aroused by the sight of bodily beauty; but the adulterous love is a precipitation from sight to touch.

How Useful is the Socratic Love.

Chapter XVI

Do you ask for what the Socratic Love is useful? First, indeed, it avails most to a man for recovering those wings by which to fly back to his fatherland. Second, it avails greatly to his state for living honestly, and happily. Truly, "Men, not stones, make up a state." But men, from their youth, like trees, have to be protected from weaker men and trained for the best fruit. Parents and teachers have the care of children, but youths no sooner escape the supervision of parents and teachers than they are debased by wicked association with [the mob. Certainly they would follow that higher level of living received from their master, if they were not deflected from it by the intimacy and the companionship of wicked men, especially][52] those who flatter them. What, therefore, will Socrates do? Will he permit youth, which is the seed of the future state, to be corrupted by the contagion of shameful men? But where is his patriotism?

And so Socrates will come to the aid of the state and will free its sons and their brothers from this calamity. He will perhaps prescribe laws by

51 Anacreon, an Ionian lyric poet, born about 550 B. C., who wrote songs of wine and love. Anacreon is not mentioned in the passage referred to. Cf. p. 196, *supra*.

52 Omitted in the Italian.

which he will separate lascivious men from the association of youths; but we cannot all be Lycurguses and Solons.[53] To few is the authority given to make laws; and fewer still obey laws that are made. What then, will he use force and by the intervention of his own hand separate the older men from the youth? But only Hercules is said to have struggled with monsters; for anyone else, violence of this kind is most dangerous. Perhaps he will warn, rebuke, and reprove the wicked men. But the disturbed soul scorns the words of him who warns him and, what is worse, rages against the warner. For this reason, Socrates is struck with the fist by one, with the shoe by another, when he tries that method. Only one way of saving the youth remains, the companionship of Socrates. So, moved by his love for his country, that wisest of the Greeks mixes everywhere and walks with a great crowd of young men accompanying him.

So the true lover, like a shepherd, keeps his flock of lambs safe from false lovers as from the ravage of wolves and disease. Since, in fact, equals are easily congregated with equals, he makes himself equal with the young man in purity of life, in simplicity of language, games, jokes, and witticisms. He makes himself a boy instead of an old man in the first place, so that he may at some time make boys into mature men by his personal and pleasing intimacy. The youth prone to pleasure is caught by pleasure alone. He avoids stern teachers. Hence the tutor of our youth, neglecting the administration of his own affairs[54] for the welfare of his country, undertakes the care of young men and he first wins them by the attractiveness of his pleasant association. When they are thus caught, he then advises them with greater severity. Finally, he castigates them with still harsher criticism. In this way he saved Phaedo as a young man who had prostituted himself in a public brothel, from this calamity and made of him a philosopher.

He made Plato, dedicated to poesy, burn his tragedies, and undertake more valuable studies. Xenophon[55] he converted from vulgar living to the sobriety of the wise. Aeschines and Aristippus[56] he made rich men from paupers. He converted Phaedrus from an orator into a philosopher, and Alcibiades from an ignorant man into a most learned one. Charmides[57] he

53 Lycurgus, famous legendary Spartan legislator. Solon, celebrated Athenian legislator (c. 638-558 B. C.).

54 Ficino has in mind here *Apology,* 31B, where Socrates explains how he has neglected his own affairs.

55 Xenophon, pupil of Socrates, and general in the expedition of Cyrus against Artaxerxes, wrote the *Memorabilia* in defense of Socrates' reputation (in reply to Polycrates' *Accusation of Socrates,* 393 B. C.), and also wrote a *Symposium,* in imitation of Plato's.

56 Aeschines was a famous Athenian philosopher and pupil of Socrates (after whose death he became a perfumer). Besides numerous orations and epistles, he wrote some Socratic dialogues on temperance and other virtues. Aristippus, the famous hedonist, was a student of Socrates, and after his death traveled about giving lessons for money.

57 Charmides was Plato's maternal uncle and is represented in the dialogue bearing his name as a youth, the pupil of Socrates.

made earnest and modest, and Theages[58] a just and brave citizen in the state. Euthydemus and Meno[59] he won over from the quibblings of the Sophists to true wisdom. Hence it was brought about that the association of Socrates was pleasing, but still more it was beneficial; but Socrates was much more ardently loved by the young men, as Alcibiades said, than he loved any of them.

How Thanks are to be Given to the Holy Spirit Which Has Illuminated and Inspired Us for this Discussion.

Chapter XVII

Now, therefore, my noble guests, we seem fortunately to have learned what Love is, who is the true lover, and what is the utility of love, first from your discussion and last from mine. But remember also that without a doubt the cause and teacher of this most fortunate discovery was the very same Love who has been discovered. With the result that, aroused by love of finding love, so to speak, we have sought and found Love, so that we must be thankful to Him equally for the question and its answer. O, wonderful magnificence of this God! O, incomparable beneficence of Love! Indeed, the rest of the gods reveal themselves finally only after you have sought them for a long time. Love runs to meet us before we seek Him, and so men confess that they owe much more to Him than to any other god.

But there are those who dare often to curse divine power as the punisher of our crimes. Some even hate divine Wisdom because It sees all of our sins. But divine Love, the giver of all the divine goods, we cannot help loving. Therefore, my friends, let us so worship this Love that is so kindly toward us, as to venerate his wisdom and wonder at his power so that, under Love's leadership, we may possess, so to speak, the whole God, and, loving the whole with the glow of love, we may enjoy the whole God with perpetual love.

58 Theages, the son of Demodocus, appears in Plato in the (doubtful) dialogue named after him.

59 Euthydemus, a Sophist born at Chios, migrated to Italy, was exiled from there and went to Athens. Plato's dialogue is named after him, not after the Euthydemus, son of Diocles and disciple of Socrates, mentioned in Xenophon's *Memorabilia,* 2, 29; iv, 2, and in Plato's *Symposium,* 222. Meno was a Thessalian adventurer and a leader in the expedition of Cyrus in 401 B. C., after whom the *Meno* was named.

APPENDIX A

To His Most Illustrious and Noble Lordship,
Signor Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence,
Most Respectful Greetings:

Truly great and glorious, most illustrious and noble sir, were the goodness and benignity of our Marsilio Ficino, a worthy pupil, certainly, of the great Cosimo de' Medici, in whose illustrious memory your excellency has been named. Ficino, not content with having given to the Latins Plato, illustrated and explained with many learned writings of his own, desired no less to please all those who had command of our language only, than he had formerly[1] desired to gratify the learned. Therefore, at the suggestion of your Lorenzo the Magnificent, he deigned to translate into our native tongue the *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*,[2] which he had written in Latin, dedicating this Italian translation to Bernardo del Nero and Antonio Manetti, his dear friends, as is indicated in his own dedicatory epistle.

Though his intention was truly benign and holy, it has not yet hit the mark at which he himself aimed, since this treasure of his has lain hidden, as it were, up to our time, or has been really appreciated by few. For this reason, both because of the beneficent intention of Marsilio and the benefits which could result if only the *Commentary* could be read and understood now with the faith and conviction with which he himself wrote and translated it, and because I had access to a manuscript copied from the original itself, I wished to share it with all who understand our language, but under the noble name of your excellency, as of him to whom I must render not only that which belongs to him as hereditary property, but also everything that I now am or ever could be.

Therefore accept this, your excellency, with generous spirit, and know that it is printed with as much care as possible. And do not wonder that you do not find the text of Plato before the commentary, because I preferred to follow the judgment of Marsilio, with the charge of having feared the labor of translating it, than to give to the unlearned, who usually consider only the surface of things, occasion to kindle in their minds, because of his figurative and profound mode of expression, those emotions which are discussed there perhaps more completely than is appropriate to a common language such as ours. This is really the reason that Marsilio translated it and commented on it for the Latins and did not wish to give in his own language more than the commentary, because the original was a thing truly Christian, and not to be desecrated.

1 i.e. in his Latin version of the *Commentary*.
2 Here called, "sopra lo Amore di Platone."

Therefore, read it, your excellency, and continue, as you have so beneficently heretofore, to encourage students of this language, to honor and enrich it with every ancient fine art and wholesome science, and remember me as the most faithful servant of your excellency.

Most Devotedly,
Cosimo Bartoli

Marsilio Ficino to Bernardo del Nero and Antonio Manetti.

As a general rule, a thing which a man does frequently and often, after long experience he does well, and the longer he is accustomed to it, the better he does it. But in the case of love, this rule, because of our stupidity, and much to our sorrow, does not hold.

We all love continuously in some way, but almost all of us love wrongly, and the more we love, the worse. And if one in a hundred thousand loves rightly, because his is not the common practice, no one follows his example.

We fall into this great error, unfortunately for us, because we boldly start out upon this difficult journey of love before we know its destination or how to travel the perilous path of the journey. The farther we go, the farther we stray to our great undoing; and losing our way in this dark forest[1] is more serious than on other journeys because we travel there in larger numbers and more often.

In order to lead us back to the straight path which we had missed, the supreme love of Divine Providence in ancient Greece inspired a chaste woman called Diotima the priestess, who, under the divine inspiration, finding the philosopher Socrates devoted above all else to love, explained to him what this ardent passion is and how by means of it we can fall into the greatest evil, or soar to the highest good.

Socrates (in turn) revealed these holy mysteries to Plato, and Plato, the most kindly of all philosophers, immediately made a book of them for the salvation of the Greeks. For the salvation of the Latins, I translated Plato's book from Greek into Latin, and encouraged by our Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, commented upon the more difficult ideas in the book; and in order that this health-giving manna sent to Diotima from heaven might be available and serviceable to more people, I have translated from Latin into Tuscan both the Platonic mysteries and my own commentary. This volume I dedicate especially to you, Bernardo del Nero and Antonio Manetti, my dear friends, because I am certain that the love which your Marsilio Ficino sends you, you will receive with love, and explain to anyone who might presume to read this book carelessly or with malice, a thing which no one will ever be able to do, because the diligence of love is not to be understood through negligence, and love itself is not grasped through hatred.

May the Holy Spirit, that Divine Love, which inspired Diotima, enlighten our own minds and kindle our wills so that we may love Him in all His beautiful works, and then love His works in Him and at last infinitely enjoy His infinite Beauty.

1 Cf. the same figure of the dark forest in Canto I of Dante's *Inferno*.

APPENDIX B

Ode of Love
by
Guido Cavalcanti

[Translated by Jefferson B. Fletcher in his *Literature of the Italian Renaissance*. Used with the kind permission of Dr. Fletcher and the Macmillan Company.]

I

A Lady entreats me; wherefore I will tell
Of a quality too frequently malign,
Yet so divine that men have called it Love:
Thus may the truth whatever doubt dispel.
Adept I ask unto this task of mine,
For my design, I fear me, is above
His wit that is at heart of base degree.
For me proof philosophic is defined,
Else disinclined I feel me to recite
Where Love has place; created by what might;
And what its virtue is; and potency;
Verity essential; motions of what kind;
Its name assigned as Love for what delight;
And if it may be manifest to sight.

II

In that part where the memory resides
It makes appearance; as transparence shows
Through which light flows, so Love its form acquires,
From shadow cast by Mars, the which abides.
Created hence; nature of sense bestows
Its name, and pose of soul, and heart's desire.
It comes from visible form, which, apprehended,
Ascended into passive intellect,
There, as affect, maintains its tenancy.
Never it works in that part injury.
And since from finite kind 'tis not descended,
Unended is its radiant effect.
Nor wears aspect of joy but reverie,
For may not enter there affinity.

III

It is not virtue, but from that proceeds
Which is perfection, in complexion withal
Not rational, but feeling, I attest.
The judgment Love against well-being leads,
For ravishments intelligence enthrall.

Discernment small it has where vice is guest.
Often there follows from its puissance death,
If wrath o'ermuch the faculty dismay
Which of the way adversative is ward:
Not that with nature Love hath disaccord;
But when to perfect good lies not its path,
Who saith that life is his is led astray,
Lacking the stay which makes him his own lord.
Nor less avails Love though it be ignored.

IV

Its essence is whenas the passionate will
Beyond the measure of natural pleasure goes;
Then with repose forever is unblest.
Still fickle, smiles in tears it can fulfill,
And on the face leave pallid trace of woes.
Brief are its throes. Yet chiefly manifest
Thou shalt observe it in the nobly wise.
To sighs the new-given quality invites;
Through it man sights an ever-shifting aim,
Till in him wrath is kindled, darting flame.
Conceive it none save one its puissance tries.
Complies it never though it still incites;
And no delights one seeketh in its name,
Neither great wisdom, sooth—or small—to frame.

V

A glance Love draws from like-attempered heart
Which seeming right to all delight implies.
In secret guise Love comes not, so declared.
Indeed not scornful beauty is the dart.
For that way led desire through dread is wise,
But merit lies with spirit that is snared.
And not to sight is Love made manifest,
For by its test o'ertaken man falls white;
And, hears one right that form is seen by none,
Then least by him that is by Love undone.
Of color of being Love is dispossessed.
At rest in shadow space it cancels light.
Without false sleight saith a faith-worthy one,
That from it only is the guerdon won.

VI

Ode, thou mayst go thy ways, unfaltering,
Where pleases thee: I have thee so adorned
That never scorned shall be thy reasoning
By such as bring to thee intelligence:
To bide with others mak'st thou no pretence.